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CLASSICAL

THE PLAYS OF ARISTOPHANES · VOL. II.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE

THE
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THE FROGS AND THREE OTHER PLAYS OF ARISTOPHANES

Translated by Frere, Hickie, Mitchell and Cumberland

London & Toronto
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

FIRST ISSUE OF THIS EDITION . 1911
REPRINTED 1917, 1922

882
899

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

597.

INTRODUCTION

[1820]

By John Hookham Frere

Some of our readers may be disposed to think that the subject of the Aristophanic comedy has of late occupied a sufficient space in our pages: we must, however, persevere, and insist like Falstaff—"Play on the play. We have much to say in behalf of that same Aristophanes." With respect to the present translation, it may truly be said to be much the best that has hitherto appeared in our own, or, as far as our acquaintance extends, in any other modern language. It may even be said, with truth, that to an English reader, the first perusal of this translation may afford as much pleasure as the perusal of the original is calculated to give to a proficient in the Greek language, who undertakes, for the first time, to read a play of Aristophanes in the original. Those, however, who have indulged in a continued study of the original, and (prompted by the perpetual development of new and unobserved beauties in the change and play of style, and in the brief and pointed expression of comic character), have become entirely familiar with the author, will continue to derive a pleasure from repeated reperusals of the original, such as we cannot venture to promise to the English scholar, if he should be induced to recur, for a second or third time, to the work now before us. We shall, however, before we conclude, have the satisfaction of pointing out some passages which, like those of the original, fix themselves (the great test of excellence) involuntarily in the memory, and which may be recalled to it and repeated with undiminished gratification. The main cause of the defect alluded to, and of the disappointment which will be experienced by those who are best acquainted with the original, if they expect to find the various forms of language, and the phrases expressive of character, represented in a satisfactory manner by English equivalents,

is to be attributed to the adoption of a particular style; the style of our ancient comedy in the beginning of the 17th century. We shall proceed to give the reasons which lead us to consider this style as peculiarly proper for the purposes to which our own early dramatic poets applied it; and which, at the same time, and for the same reasons, if they are just ones, must render it wholly unsuitable for representing or reproducing that peculiar species of drama to which the comedies of Aristophanes belong.

The early comedy of modern Europe, that of the first half of the 17th century, is a fancy portrait of the society of the time. The pleasure which it afforded was similar to that which we experience when we contemplate a picture, in which the resemblance of a countenance familiar to us is expressed with that addition of harmony and grace which embellish the resemblance, without much detracting from its truth. Such was the character and principle of the dramas of Calderon and his contemporaries; and, before him, of Lope; and of Fletcher, Shirley, and others, amongst ourselves. In all these, dignity of character is uniformly maintained—the cavaliers are represented as daring and generous, delicate and faithful to excess: the highest tone of sentiment is kept up: the tone of the language also (which is more to our purpose) is proportionably elevated above the common parlance of those times. Hence, as in tragedy (and for the same reasons), the appearance of truth and nature in the whole composition is preserved by the easy and probable arrangement of events, quarrels, jealousies, discoveries, and sudden turns of fortune, which constitute what is called the plot. The excellence of these comedies, and the merit of the author, were estimated, in great measure, from the construction of the plot; for as by the rules which belong to that species of drama, the language and characters were idealised, and, therefore, to a certain degree, removed from reality and experience, the admission of this improbability would require to be compensated by a greater apparent probability in the only part which remained, viz., the action and events.[1]

[1] In what we have said on this subject, we have followed the course by which we are persuaded that the authors we have mentioned arrived at the conclusions which guided their practice; but for mere illustration it would be equally obvious to invert the statement, and to say that where the incidents are probable, the language and sentiments must be elevated

But the ancient Aristophanic comedy proceeded upon a principle of compensation totally different. In this species of composition, the utter extravagance and impossibility of the supposed action is an indispensable requisite; the portion of truth and reality, which is admitted as a counterpoise, consists wholly in the character and language. It is a grave, humorous, impossible, GREAT LIE, related with an accurate mimicry of the language and manner of the persons introduced, and great exactness of circumstance in the inferior details. In its simpler state, it appears to be one of the commonest and most spontaneous products of the human mind; and usually arises in some strong expression, which, a moment after, is taken literally, converted into a reality, and invested with all the circumstances of action and dialogue. We shall show that the plays, the *Acharnæ* and the *Knights* (or *Demagogues*),[1] are capable of being traced to the kind of conversation, out of which, in all probability, they did originate.

There are other plays, which appear to have grown up from mere sport, when, in a playful conversation, fancied events are developed into an imaginary detail.

If we were possessed of the Boswells of antiquity, who are cited by Athenæus, we might, perhaps, find some notices which would illustrate the history of the comic stage; but for want of them, let us suppose an ancient prototype of our entertaining countryman, giving an account of the origin and first suggestion of the *Thesmophoriazousæ*.

After supper Philonides, meaning to rouse Aristophanes, who had been cracking his nuts without much attending to the conversation, began to talk about Euripides, and, turning to Aristophanes, asked him what he thought of his last tragedy?

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above ordinary nature, and in this order it would seem that the inferior tribe of dramatists have, in general, proceeded, taking probability of character and incident as their basis, and endeavouring to ennoble it by displays of style and sentiment. The result of the direct and of the inverted process may be exemplified in the *Electras* of Sophocles and Euripides; in the first, the display of character is evidently the principal object; the probability of the story is artfully elaborated; but we see that it was a secondary consideration. In Euripides, on the contrary, probability is evidently the primary object, while the characters are left to display themselves as circumstances may permit. We have taken our illustration of the two opposite processes from tragedy, because, in fact, this system of counterpoise, in which the probability of the story is placed as a weight in one of the scales, belongs equally to tragedy and to the higher species of comedy.

[1] These plays appear in vol. i. of this series.

Arist. "Why, it has his usual faults and his usual merits, only I think he's more than usually severe upon the women."

Phil. "He's worse than ever—why, he'll drive them to desperation—yes, they will be driven to some desperate measure against him—we have had so many plots and conspiracies of late, the women will take the hint—we shall have a conspiracy of the women against Euripides."

Arist. "Well, now is their time—they have three days to themselves at the Thesmophoria—considering how the art of plotting is improved, there is time enough to form a very promising conspiracy."

Phil. "Upon my word, I begin to suspect that there must be something of the kind in agitation—I almost think it would be right to speak to some friend of Euripides to desire him to be upon his guard. But what would he do, do you think, upon the first alarm?"

M. or *N.* (*across the table*). "Why, I suppose he would consult with that fine rough-handed fellow his father-in-law Mnesilochus."

Arist. "No, he would not consult him; he would only tell him to keep himself in readiness to receive his orders."

Phil. "But what would be the first thing he would do?"

Arist. "The first thing, of course, would be to compose one of his long apologetical harangues, according to all the established rules of rhetoric, and in direct opposition to decorum and common sense."

Phil. "But after all, this harangue must be delivered among the assembled females—how is he to contrive that?—The women are so exasperated against him, none of them would be persuaded to appear as his advocate."

M. or *N.* (*as before*). "Might not Agathon, the poet, go amongst them in disguise, with that smooth face of his?"

Arist. "Oh no, Agathon would take care of himself, depend upon it; he will never get himself into a scrape for anybody."

Phil. "Well then, it must be old Mnesilochus himself—Euripides must shave him and dress him up for the purpose. But what will become of him when he is detected?"

Arist. "Then, of course, Euripides must exert himself, and employ his whole system of tragical devices for his escape."

Phil. (*after a pause*). "Well, now, Aristophanes, I can't help thinking, if all that we have been saying was put together, and worked up in your way, it would turn out a very tolerable comedy."

Arist. "Why perhaps it might, as good as some of mine are; and better than some others; and better than other people's."

Phil. "Then perhaps you will think of it, if nothing better should occur, as a subject in time for the next festival?"

Arist. "Why perhaps I may."

For the sake of those who may not have read it, or who do not immediately recollect it, it may be necessary to state that this supposed dialogue comprehends all the material incidents of the comedy.

The origin of the *Acharnæ* is simpler. Let us suppose an honest warm-tempered man obliged (as many were at the time), like Dicæopolis in this play, to abandon his landed property to destruction, and to take refuge in the town—we may suppose that he would be likely to express his feelings nearly in this way:

" If our great politicians, and your leading people here in Athens, choose to waste the public treasure in embassies and expeditions, that is their own affair; but I do not see what right they have to bring down a Peloponnesian army to drive me out of my farm—there's no quarrel that we country-people ever had with them to my knowledge—we should all be glad enough to let-alone for let-alone—for my part, if these enemies of ours (as they call them) would allow me to live on my farm, and buy and sell as I used to do, I'd give 'em up all the money I'm worth, and thank 'em into the bargain—and I'd go there to-morrow:—but as for our statesmen, I'm persuaded if a Deity were to come down from Heaven, on purpose to propose a peace to them, they would never listen to him."

We have here a natural and passionate form of expression, which, uttered in the hearing of a poet such as Aristophanes, was sufficient to suggest the plot of the Acharnæ and the scene of the Demigod Amphitheus; the rest of the play, with all its wild and fanciful circumstances, being, in fact, nothing more than a whimsical exemplification of the first supposition; namely, that a private citizen had succeeded in concluding and maintaining a separate peace.

With respect to the play of the *Knights* (or *Demagogues*), the very conversation out of which it originated is to be traced in the passage from line 125 to 144 of the original. The conversation turned upon " the degradation of the democracy since the death of Pericles, whose successors in administration had been a lintseller, Eucrates, a sheepseller, Lysicles, and a leatherseller, Cleon, (*στυππειοπώλης — προβατοπώλης —βυρσοπώλης*), who had superseded each other in a rapid succession." Then some speculation arose as to what branch of trade was likely to furnish the leading statesmen to whom the destinies of the state were to be next entrusted, when (in reference to the occupation of one Hyperbolus, whose rising impudence and rascality appeared to mark him out for popular eminence) it was said, " Depend upon it, it will be a lampseller "—*λυχνοπώλης τις ἢ λαμπαδοπώλης;*—to which the answer was *Μὰ Δία· ἀλλ' ἀλλαντοπώλης*—" Depend upon it, we cannot expect to stop short in the downfall of all decency and dignity—the lowest occupation will have the best chance—we shall have a sausage-seller." The particular occupation " a sausage-seller " would be suggested by something of a similarity in the sound of the words in Greek.

We have here the whole action of the play, which supposes a sausage-seller to succeed in supplanting Cleon, and to assume the administration in his place: the personification of the

Athenian democracy is an invention of the highest poetical and moral merit; but it would seem to have been secondary in point of time, and to have been adopted as one of the means of arriving at the predetermined result. We think that the primary idea, from which the whole organisation of the play was evolved, must have existed in a conversation somewhat similar to that which we have supposed.

We have been somewhat diffuse in our illustration of the mode of Invention which belongs to this species of Comedy, because it has in general been regarded as utterly extravagant and unaccountable; at least by all those who have considered it in reference to the established rules of dramatic composition and invention; we shall now resume, briefly, but with a more comprehensive view, the subject with which we set out, and from which we have so long digressed.

The object of the poetic and dramatic art is to instruct without offence; to give men hints of their faults and errors, sufficiently strong to enable them, each for himself, to make the personal application to his own case, but so that neither the author nor the actor shall appear in the character of an accuser, or even of a monitor, which, among equals, is always odious.[1] In order to effect this, truth must be mixed up with some ingredients of unreality; either the persons must be obviously fictitious, as in fable, or the events must be impossible, as in the Aristophanic comedy; or supposing the events to be combined with probability, the language and sentiments must be removed from the reality of ordinary life, as is the case in tragedy, and (to a certain degree) in our own old regular comedy of the seventeenth century, the comedy of Jonson and Fletcher. Thus, absolute Reality is to be avoided as too directly offensive; but absolute Unreality is equally objectionable, it is vague, feeble, and applies to nothing. The two opposites must be combined. Where the events are coherent and possible, the language must be ideal—where

[1] This is the true medium, and whenever the Drama professes to do more (like most extravagant professors) it commonly betrays its trust.—Comedy at once moral and probable, is found, generally speaking, to be nothing more than a formal sententious sycophant, inveighing against vices and errors which are no longer in vogue; and celebrating exclusively those virtues which are most nearly allied to the prevailing follies and disorders of the time. It is the morality of the *Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin*, which (as a friend observed) is precisely that of a grave, sober, discreet, obliging, grey-headed keeper of a bagnio.

the fiction is wild and extravagant, its extravagance must be compensated by a reality in the language. In Shakespeare's play of the *Tempest*, we perceive a tendency to a fault arising out of a neglect of this rule, and the correction which his great judgment applied to it; the impossibility of the events, combined with the ideality of the language and characters, begin to give a character of vagueness and vacuity to the scene, till the strong infusion of vulgar reality in the character of Trinculo, and his speculations on the profit which might be made in London by exhibiting his friend Caliban, restore the equilibrium at once, and place the spectator in that due medium between truth and falsehood which the laws of composition require.

In Aristophanes it may be observed that in those parts of his plays in which the circumstances are the most outrageously impossible, the truth and reality of the dialogue are the most studiously laboured. It is then that he delights to exhibit the little unavowed struggle for ascendancy, with its alternate triumphs, efforts, and defeats, and, above all, the pride of local information by which the new-comer, whether at the mansion of Jupiter or of Pluto, is kept at arm's length and obliged to bow to the superior knowledge and importance of the established resident. But as all the plays of Aristophanes involve more or less the assumption of some impossibility, so throughout, the perfect reality of the dialogue, both in the little artifices of conversation, and in the forms and turns of expression, is maintained; we might say, uniformly; but that occasionally passages are interspersed consisting either of burlesque of particular passages in the tragic writers, or of the tragic style in general. Now as these passages are perfectly distinguishable in the original, they ought undoubtedly to be at least recognisable in the translation; and here we think that the choice which Mr. Mitchell has made of a style borrowed from our early comedies, has subjected him to particular disadvantages: the tone of his general style having been pitched too high, and partaking of an artificial character, it becomes impossible almost to mark, by any corresponding change, those transitions by which the original passes from natural into artificial language. Hence, in the dialogue between Dicæopolis and Euripides, and in the harangue of the former, the variation and play of style, passing perpetually

from the natural to the burlesque, and, in the scene between Demosthenes and the Sausage-seller, the strong declamatory language of the one, and the vulgar interruptions of the other, are represented in the translation by the same uniform and artificial language. It is not too much to say that if Ben Jonson himself, who was certainly a mighty master both of learning and humour, had attempted a translation of Aristophanes, in the same style which he has employed in his own comedies, the very nature of the attempt would have made it impossible for him to produce an adequate representation of the original. But Jonson would have possessed many advantages, which cannot belong to a modern who undertakes to perform the same task in language imitated from him. The language of Jonson, though not purely natural, was at least founded upon, and immediately deduced from nature; it was not an imitation of daily speech, but was conformable to it, and never lost sight of it as a test by which the proper employment of words, and the natural combination of them, was to be determined. Hence, though we are sensible that the language is neither simple nor natural, we are never shocked by anomalous or discordant arrangements of words; the aberration is confined within a certain limit—a limit which was traced out to the author by that usage:

Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

But the author, who attempts to write in the language of times that are past, has no such guide; he has no resource beyond his books, and if they fail him or mislead him, he is in perpetual danger of committing offences against the propriety of language. In a work of so much merit and labour, we should be unwilling to quote particular passages for reprobation; but there are many in which the English idiom is so strained, that a reader to whose recollection the original is not immediately present, would be led to conclude, that the harshness of the translation must have arisen from a verbal adherence to the idiom of the original; and he is surprised, on turning to it, to find that the phrase which he has condemned is given as the English equivalent for an idiom of a different construction. But even if the style and language of our own old comedies were suited to represent the character of the ancient Aristophanic comedy; which from the essential

differences subsisting between the two genera, we think, that it is *not*;—and even supposing that ancient style to be perfectly imitated, we should still feel an objection, arising from the very perfection of the imitation; as it would have a constant tendency to destroy that illusion which it is the object of the translator to create: the translation might be admirable, but the reader would be constantly reminded that he was reading an admirable translation—he would never be allowed to lose himself in the thoughts and images, and forget for a moment the language in which they were conveyed to him.

The language of translation ought, we think, as far as possible, to be a pure, impalpable, and invisible element, the medium of thought and feeling, and nothing more; it ought never to attract attention to itself; hence all phrases that are remarkable in themselves, either as old or new; all importations from foreign languages, and quotations, are as far as possible to be avoided. This may appear somewhat too strict to some of our readers; but we are persuaded that Mr. Mitchell himself is too well acquainted with the principles of translation, not to be aware, upon reflection, that such phrases as he has sometimes admitted, "*solus cum solo*," for instance, "*petits pâtés*," etc., have the immediate effect of reminding the reader that he is reading a translation, and that the illusion of originality, which the spirited or natural turn of a sentence immediately preceding might have excited, is instantly dissipated by it.

We think that licences of this kind have in themselves a character of petulance and flippancy—that they are wholly unworthy of the judgment and good taste which Mr. Mitchell has in general shown:—they belong more properly to that class of translators who are denominated *Spirited Translators*, whose spirit and ability consist in substituting a modern variety or peculiarity for an ancient one, to the utter confusion of all unity of time, place, and character; leaving the mind of the reader bewildered as in a masquerade, crowded and confused with ancient and modern costumes. Of this class of translators, and of their ancient and inveterate antagonists, the *Faithful Translators*, we should wish to say something, because we think that it may tend to illustrate the principle of translation generally. The proper domain of the Trans-

lator is, we conceive, to be found in that vast mass of feeling, passion, interest, action, and habit which is common to mankind in all countries and in all ages; and which, in all languages, is invested with its appropriate forms of expression, capable of representing it in all its infinite varieties, in all the permanent distinctions of age, profession, and temperament, which have remained immutable, and of which the identity is to be traced almost in every page of the author before us.

Nothing can be more convincing or more deeply astonishing than the result which must remain upon the mind of every man who has read the remains of Aristophanes with the attention which they deserve. It is evident that every shade of the human character, and the very mode in which each is manifested, remain the same; not a genus or a species is become extinct; many even which might naturally have been considered as mere accidental varieties, are still preserved, or have been reproduced.

The original author who is addressing his contemporaries must of course make use of phrases according to their conventional import; he will likewise, for the sake of immediate effect, convey his general observations in the form of local or even personal allusion. It is the office, we presume, of the Translator to represent the forms of language according to the intention with which they are employed; he will therefore in his translation make use of the phrases in his own language to which habit and custom have assigned a similar conventional import, taking care, however, to avoid those which, from their form or any other circumstances, are connected with associations exclusively belonging to modern manners; he will likewise, if he is capable of executing his task upon a philosophic principle, endeavour to resolve the personal and local allusions into the genera, of which the local or personal variety employed by the original author is merely the accidental type; and to reproduce them in one of those permanent forms which are connected with the universal and immutable habits of mankind. The Faithful Translator will not venture to take liberties of this kind; he *renders* into English all the conversational phrases according to their grammatical and logical form, without any reference to the current usage which had affixed to them an arbitrary sense, and

appropriated them to a particular and definite purpose. He retains scrupulously all the local and personal peculiarities, and in the most rapid and transient allusions thinks it his duty to arrest the attention of the reader with a tedious explanatory note. The Spirited Translator, on the contrary, employs the corresponding modern phrases; but he is apt to imagine that a peculiar liveliness and vivacity may be imparted to his performance by the employment of such phrases as are particularly connected with modern manners; and if at any time he feels more than usually anxious to avoid the appearance of pedantry, he thinks he cannot escape from it in any way more effectually than by adopting the slang and jargon of the day. The peculiarities of ancient times he endeavours to represent by substituting in their place the peculiarities of his own time and nation.

But after all that we have said, an instance in the two opposite styles will perhaps make our meaning more intelligible: Bacchus is interposing to calm the controversy between Æschylus and Euripides, which is rising into violence on both sides, and he represents to them:

λοιδορεῖσαι δ' οὐ πρέπει
Ἄνδρας ποιητὰς ὥσπερ ἀρτοπώλιδας,

literally:

It ill beseems
Illustrious bards to scold like bakers' wives.

And so, accordingly, the literal and Faithful Translator will render it, with the addition of a note, in which he makes it clear, by the testimony of various learned authorities, that the bakers' wives in Athens were addicted to scolding above their fellows. Not so the Spirited Translator; he looks for a modern peculiarity to countervail the ancient, and puts boldly, "to scold like oyster wenches."

But he, the lawful and true Translator, such as we conceive him—*τὸν φρόνιμον ἄνδρα τὸν ὑπέρσοφον*—proceeding upon the philosophic principle before mentioned, and revolving in his mind those characteristics, which (from the necessary order of sublunary things) must inseparably adhere to the practice of inferior traffic in a place of open competition; and more especially where the articles exposed for sale are in themselves of a perishable and transitory nature; he

will infer *a priori*, that among the vendors of such commodities, so circumstanced, a spirit of objurgatory altercation must of necessity prevail; the authority of antiquity, the concurring reports of enlightened and veracious travellers, the testimony of his own ears, in passing through the various Agorai of our own metropolis, will satisfy him, that the conclusion to which he before arrived by induction is a just one; and that the race of Market Scolds are a permanent and imperishable species. Emboldened by this discovery, he proceeds to resolve the variety into the species, and ventures to translate ἀρτοπώλιδος "hucksters" or "market-women," as may happen to suit the verse; and though the passage so rendered be neither brilliant nor spirited, nor literally faithful, he is satisfied, that by avoiding both the ancient and the modern peculiarity, he does not (during the perusal of one line at least) oblige his reader to recollect that the work which he has before him is a mere translation.

But in order to convey more perfectly our own idea of what we should consider as an adequate translation, we will suppose an imaginary case:—An ancient manuscript containing one of the plays of Aristophanes, hitherto supposed to have been lost, falls by some accident into the hands of a person capable of translating it upon the principle which we should consider as the true one. He translates accordingly, and publishes his translation; but determines for a time to keep the original to himself. The learned readers of such a translation, when they had finished their perusal, might be able to infer, from the total absence of any of those peculiarities, unintelligible to an English reader, which belong to antiquity, but which are no wise characteristic of it, which distract the attention without affording employment for the imagination—they would infer, we say, from the total absence of all these types of authenticity, that the translation could not have been executed in strict and literal conformity to the text of the supposed manuscript. But if on the other hand, the tone and character of antiquity, and the general spirit of the original author, should have been so perfectly maintained throughout, as to make it impossible to fix upon any one passage, of which it could confidently be said, "that it was a deviation from the original," or if in so fixing upon a particular passage, the learned before-mentioned should happen

to be wrong; we should conceive in such a case, that the translator had in no degree transgressed the limits of that licence which is fairly allowable to him; that he had fulfilled at least one important condition, in preserving the unity and propriety of costume; and that he ought in justice to be exempt from that condemnation to which the race of spirited translators, before mentioned, are, we think, deservedly consigned.

We shall now return to a part of our subject of which we had almost lost sight. The principle of generalisation will be found, we imagine, to be more or less applicable to translation, in proportion as the mind of the original author may be found to have proceeded habitually upon the same principles. Shakespeare appears at the first glance to be an author, beyond all others, encumbered and beset with accidental peculiarities (the peculiarities of his own age and nation), and might accordingly be considered as incapable of being properly translated; but a deeper insight into his works discovers a spirit of generalisation, in which the local and peculiar allusions served but as types and abstracts of universal and permanent forms: hence we should see no reason why a mind capable of truly comprehending him, and possessing a practical command of any modern language, might not succeed (as the Germans are said to have done) in producing an adequate translation of his works. The same remark will apply to Aristophanes; the impossibility of producing a good translation of him has been so long repeated, that it has come at last to be admitted as an established critical dogma: he is, indeed, like Shakespeare (and even in a much greater degree) encumbered with local and individual allusions, and might from that difficulty alone, if it were an insuperable one, be abandoned at once as untranslateable; but the greater portion of his works has evidently been conceived in a deep and comprehensive spirit of generalisation: if therefore we suppose a competent portion of dexterity in the management of any modern language to be superadded to a thorough comprehension of the original, we, for our parts, are unable to see why an adequate translation, of such parts at least of the original as have been composed upon these principles, may not by possibility be produced; the talent and attainments requisite are not of the highest order, and if we add to these

a natural feeling of taste, and a disposition to execute the task, with the degree of perfection of which it is capable, it should seem that little else would be requisite.

We have ventured to say that Aristophanes composed for the most part upon principles of generalisation; and we repeat it. His representation is, indeed, a caricature of the Genus; but still it is Generic. Lamachus, for instance, in the play before us (the *Acharnians*), is not the individual *Lamachus;* he is as pure an abstract as his opponent Dicæopolis; the one proud, haughty, courteous, romantic, adventurous, and imaginative; the other shrewd, calculating, peaceful and sensual, humble or saucy, as circumstances may require or permit: they are the permanent contrasts of human nature, and like their parallels, Don Quixote and Sancho, belong equally to all nations and times.

The pretensions and airs of the Envoys returned from two courts of a different description, are not accidental but permanent traits. If we substitute the court of the Czar Peter and that of Louis XIV. for Thrace and Persia, we shall see that the Envoy returned from the one would be disposed to boast of his familiarity with the barbarous Autocrat, the rude conviviality in which they had lived together, and the sincerity and heartiness of his royal friend's politics; while the other, in an affected tone of complaint, would detail the intolerable excess of luxury and magnificence and accommodation which had been obtruded upon him at Versailles and the voyage de Marly.

The two Country People who are introduced as attending Dicæopolis's market, are not merely a Megarian and a Theban, distinguished by a difference of dialect and behaviour; they are the two extremes of rustic character—the one (the Megarian), depressed by indigence into meanness, is shifting and selfish, with habits of coarse fraud and vulgar jocularity. The caricature, to be sure, is extravagant; but it is a caricature of the Genus. The Theban is the direct opposite—a primitive, hearty, frank, unsuspicious, easy-minded fellow; he comes to market with his followers in a kind of old-fashioned rustic triumph, with his bagpipers attending him: Dicæopolis (the Athenian, the medium between the two extremes before described) immediately exhibits his superior refinement by suppressing their minstrelsy; and the honest Theban, instead

of being offended, joins in condemning them. He then displays his wares, and the Athenian, with a burlesque tragical rant, takes one of his best articles (a Copaic eel) and delivers it to his own attendants to be conveyed within doors. The Theban, with great simplicity, asks how he is to be paid for it, and the Athenian, in a tone of grave superiority, but with some awkwardness, informs him that he claims it, as a toll due to the market. The Theban does not remonstrate, but after some conversation agrees to dispose of all his wares, and to take other goods in return; but here a difficulty arises, for the same articles which the Athenian proposes in exchange happen to be equally abundant in Bœotia; the scene here passes into burlesque, but it is a burlesque expressive of the character which is assigned to the Theban; a character of primitive simplicity, utterly unacquainted with all the pests by which existence was poisoned in the corrupt community of Athens. A common Sycophant or Informer is proposed as an article which the Athenian soil produced in great abundance, but which would be considered as a rarity in Bœotia. The Theban agrees to the exchange, saying, that if he could get such an animal to take home he thinks he could make a handsome profit by exhibiting him. A noted informer (Nicarchus by name) immediately appears; the Theban replies to his first inquiry with the utmost simplicity, and the informer in return denounces his merchandise as enemies' property. Upon this the Athenian proceeds to execute his bargain by seizing him, and (with the assistance of his attendants) tying him round with cords like an oil-jar; this operation is performed in cadence to a lively song of no great meaning (not much unlike that of Nancy Dawson), after which he is properly adjusted as a burden on the back of the Theban's attendants, who departs with his purchase.

As this scene has been omitted by Mr. Mitchell, we shall insert an attempt which has been made to translate it, on the principles which have been recommended above.

Scene.—DICÆOPOLIS, *the Athenian, in his new Market-place, which (by virtue of a private Treaty) he has opened to the Citizens of those States which were at war with Athens.—Enter a* THEBAN *with his Attendants all bearing Burdens, and followed by a Train of Bagpipers.*

Theban. Good troth, I'm right-down shoulder-gall'd; my Lad,
Set down your bundles—You—take care o' the herbs,

Gently—be sure don't bruise 'em, and now You Minstrels
That needs must follow us all the way from Thebes,
Blow wind i' the tail of your Bagpipes—Puff away.
Dicæ. Get out!—what wind has brought 'em here, I wonder?—
A parcel of Hornets buzzing about the door!
You humble-bumble drones—Get out—Get out—
Theb. As Iolaus shall help me; that's well done,
Friend, and I thank you;—coming out of Thebes
They blew me away the blossoms from all these herbs—
You've served 'em right—So now, would you please to buy
What likes you best of all my Chaffer here,
All kinds, four-footed things and feather'd fowl.
Dicæ.[1] My little tight Bœotian! Welcome kindly
My little pudding-eater! What have you brought?
Theb. In a manner, everything, as a body may say
All the good cheer of Thebes and the primest wares,
Mats, trefoil, wicks for lamps, sweet marjoram,
Coots, didappers, and water-hens—What not?
Widgeon and teal.
Dicæ. Why you're come here amongst us
Like a northwind in Winter, with your wild fowl.
Theb. Moreover, I've brought geese, and hares moreover,
And eels from the lake Copais which is more.
Dicæ. O thou bestower of the best of spitchcocks
That ever yet was given to mortal man,
Permit me to salute those charming Eels.
Theb. (*addressing the Eel, and delivering it to Dicæopolis*).
Daughter, come forth and greet the courteous stranger
First-born of Fifty Damsels of the Lake.
Dicæ. O long regretted and recover'd late,
Welcome; thrice welcome to the comic quire,
Welcome to me, to Morychus and all;
—(Ye slaves, prepare the chafing-dish and stove.)
Children, behold her here, the best of Eels,
The loveliest and the best, at length return'd
After six years of absence! I myself
Will furnish you with charcoal for her sake.
Salute her with respect, and wait upon
Her entrance there within, with due conveyance:
[*The Eel is here carried off by Dicæopolis's servants.*
—Grant me, ye Gods! so to possess thee still,
While my life lasts, and at my latest hour,
Fresh even and sweet as now—with . . . Savory Sauce.[2]
Theb. But how am I to be paid for it? Won't you tell me?
Dicæ. Why with respect to this Eel, in the present instance,
I mean to take it as a perquisite,

[1] Dicæopolis is made to practise the common trick of ascendancy; taking no notice of the newcomer for some time, and then recognising him suddenly with a kind of hearty jolly condescension.

[2] The conclusion in broader burlesque is expressed in the original by the word *ἐντετευτλανωμένης*. Aristophanes gives it to show the rhythm suited to the conclusion of such a passage, and to mark more strongly the defect of the line in Euripides, from which it is parodied, ending with three words, each of them a separate iambic foot, *τῆς μόνης πιστῆς ἐμοί*. The burlesque word has the true tender faltering cadence—*μηδὲ γὰρ θανὼν ποτε Σοῦ χωρὶς εἶην ἐντετευτλανωμένης*.

As a kind of toll to the market—you understand me—
—These other things—I suppose you mean to sell them?
Theb. Yes, sure—I sell 'em all.
Dicæ. Well, what do you ask?
Or would you take commodities in exchange?
Theb. Ay; think of something of your country produce
That's plentiful Down Here, and scarce Up There.
Dicæ. Well you shall take our Pilchards or our Pottery.
Theb. Pilchards and Pottery!—Naw! we've plenty of they—
But think of something, as I said before,
That's plentiful Down Here, and scarce Up There—
Dicæ. (*after a moment's reflection*).
I have it!—A true-bred Sycophant, an Informer—
I'll give you one, tied neatly and corded up,
Like an oil-jar.
Theb. Ay; that's fair; by the Holy Twins!
He'd bring in money, I warrant; money enough,
Amongst our folks at home, with showing him,
Like a mischief-full kind of a foreign Ape.
Dicæ. Well, there's Nicarchus bustling on this way,
Laying his Informations—There he comes.
Theb. (*contemplating him with the eye of a purchaser*).
'A seems but a small one to look at.
Dicæ. Ay, but I promise ye,
He's full of tricks and roguery, every inch of him.

Enter NICARCHUS

Nic. (*in the pert peremptory tone of his profession as an Informer*).
Whose goods are these? these articles?
Theb. Mine sure;
We be come here from Thebes.
Nic. Then I denounce them
As enemies' property—
Theb. (*with an immediate outcry*). Why, what harm have they done,
The birds and creatures?—Why do you quarrel with 'em?
Nic. And I'll denounce you too.
Theb. What, me? What for?
Nic. To satisfy the bystanders I'll explain—
You've brought in Wicks for Lamps, from an enemy's country.
Dicæ. (*ironically*). And so, you bring 'em to *light?*
Nic. I bring to light
A plot!—a plot to burn the arsenal!
Dicæ. (*ironically*). With the Wick of Lamp?
Nic. Undoubtedly—
Dicæ. In what way?
Nic. (*with great gravity*). A Bœotian might be capable of fixing it
On the back of a Cockroach, who might float with it
Into the Arsenal, with a north-east wind,
And if once the fire caught hold of a single vessel,
The whole would be in a blaze!
Dicæ. (*seizing hold of him*). You Dog—You Villain,
Would a Cockroach burn the Ships and the Arsenal?
Nic. Bear witness, all of ye.
Dicæ. There stop his mouth;
And bring me a band of straw to bind him up,
And send him safely away for fear of breaking,
Gently and steadily, like a potter's jar.

Chor. To preserve him safe and sound,
You must have him fairly bound,
With a cordage nicely wound
Up and down and round and round;
Se-curely pack'd.

Dicæ. I shall have a special care,
For he's a piece of paltry ware,
And as you strike him Here—or There—
[*Striking him.*
The noises he returns declare—
[*The informer screaming.*
He's partly crack'd.

Chor. How then is he fit for use?

Dicæ. As a store-jar of abuse,
Fit to slander and traduce,
Plots and lies he cooks and brews,
Or anything.

Chor. Have you stow'd him safe enough?

Dicæ. Never fear, he's hearty stuff,
Fit for usage hard and rough,
Fit to beat and fit to cuff,
To toss and fling.

[*The informer, being by this time reduced to a Chrysalis state, by successive involutions of cordage, is flung about and hung up and down in illustration and confirmation of Dicæopolis's warranty of him.*

You can hang him up or down,
By the heels or by the crown.

Theb. I'm for harvest business bown.

Chor. Fare ye well, my jolly clown,
We wish ye joy.
You've a purchase tight and neat,
A rogue, a sycophant complete—
Fit to bang about and beat,
Fit to bear the cold and heat—
And all employ.

Dicæ. I'd a hard job with the rascal tying him up!
—Come, my Bœotian, take away your bargain.
Theb. (*speaking to one of his servants*). Ismenias, stoop your back, and hoist him up,
Gently and steadily—So—now carry him off—
Dicæ. He's an unlucky commodity; notwithstanding,
If he earns you a profit, you can have to say
What few can say—" you've been a gainer by him
And better'd your affairs by an informer."—[1]

Having endeavoured to explain as well as we could what we conceive to be the principles applicable to a translation of Aristophanes, and having moreover exemplified them to the best of our ability, we find it still necessary to take notice of one point which, for the sake of those readers who may

[1] The above is from Mr. Frere's own translation, then in manuscript.

be disposed to compare our version with the original, may be, perhaps, more conveniently discussed after a perusal of the translation. The principles which we before stated will account for the omission of all local peculiarities, which, however interesting as matters of curiosity to the antiquary, would, if inserted in a translation, have no other effect than that of distracting the attention, or diverting it from the broad general expression of character and humour which is evidently the primary object of the poet; but it may, perhaps, be thought, that in one or two instances we have taken an unwarrantable liberty in expanding the text of the original. Our defence must be that the text of the original is not *the original*—it is the *text* of the original and nothing more: it contains the original always *potentialiter*, but not always *actualiter*. The true actual Original, which the ancient dramatic poets had in view, and upon the success of which their hopes of applause and popularity were founded, consisted of the entire performance, as exhibited, and in the dialogue as represented by actors trained and disciplined under the immediate direction of the author himself; a sentence, therefore, of three words, or even a single word, if pronounced with the tone and gesture appropriated to it by the author, would in many, we may say in most cases, convey an expression which would not belong to the same words barely printed or written, and presenting themselves, without any accompaniment, to the mere eye of the reader: wherever, therefore, in such cases, the tone and intended expression of the original can be ascertained or fairly inferred, we conceive that the translator (if he considers it as a part of his office to convey to the modern reader the sense and intention of his author) must of necessity expand his sentences into a dimension capable of bearing a distinct and intelligible impress of character. The original author made use of a sort of comic shorthand; which was explained to the actor, and through his medium was rendered intelligible, and even obvious, to the audience: but the translator has no such intermediate agent at his command; words are his only instrument—words, in the form of dull, naked, uniform letter-press; he must, therefore, make use of them as well as he can, and he must make use of more of them, if he wishes to give his readers a tolerably easy chance of comprehending

the conception which he has formed of the original design of the author whom he professes to reproduce.

In considering the mode in which Aristophanes should be translated, there is one point of more than literary importance which we must not overlook. As we would not consent to expel Swift from the shelves of an English library, so, with respect to mere grossness, vulgarity, and nastiness, in a translation of Aristophanes, an occasional spice of each, sparingly applied (more sparingly a great deal than in the literary banquet of the Dean), may be necessary to give a notion of the genuine flavour of the original. Mere physical impurity has not changed its nature, and the ancients and the moderns do not in this respect materially differ from each other—not more, perhaps, than the higher and lower classes in the same society. Aristophanes, it must be recollected, was often under the necesssity of addressing himself exclusively to the lower class. But the σοφοὶ and the δεξιοὶ, the persons of taste and judgment, to whom the author occasionally appeals, form, in modern times, the tribunal to which his translator must address himself; the utmost which they can be expected to endure may, perhaps, be estimated by the degree of grossness which they tolerate as characteristic in the vulgar (which are not altogether the worst) comedies of Molière; and within this limit we should think that a translator of Aristophanes would do well to confine himself. But with respect to moral impurity the case is widely different; the distance between the modern Christian world and Heathen antiquity is immense, and the retrenchment must be absolute; for this reason, at least, if for no other—that the impression is not the same, and consequently can no longer correspond with the intention of the author.

We would not willingly particularise instances of this kind; but it would not be difficult to point out lines of extreme grossness which have evidently been inserted for the purpose of pacifying the vulgar part of the audience, during passages in which their anger or impatience or disappointment was likely to break out: they are evidently forced compromises on the part of the author; breaking in upon the unity of that true comic humour which he was directing to the more refined and intelligent part of his audience. When considered in connection with the context, and in relation to what is

called the business of the stage, it is probable that they were delivered (parenthetically as it were) with some peculiar broadness of gesture and tone, sufficient to separate them from that genuine vein of comic humour which the more intelligent auditors might still be able to follow, in spite of a burlesque interruption, as a Spanish audience follow up the interest of a serious dialogue without finding their attention disturbed by the buffooneries and by-play of the Gracioso. In discarding such passages, therefore, the translator is merely doing that for his author which he would willingly have done for himself. It is only in the opening scenes of his plays that material chasms would occur; for, as the poet found it necessary (like the orator) to begin "by captivating the benevolence of his auditory," these popular and conciliatory efforts are occasionally accompanied by a most profuse largesse of filth and trash.

It is now time for us to proceed to the examination of the manner in which Mr. Mitchell has executed his work. We do not mean to follow him through the Preliminary Discourse, which occupies his first hundred pages; indeed, we could only do so for the purpose of amplification and illustration. He seems to have formed, and he has communicated in a very perspicuous style, a just estimate of the genius, the character, and the patriotic intention of his author, and he has swept away with great vigour the heaps of calumnious rubbish which have been accumulating against him for so many centuries.

We will now begin at the beginning. We do not see why the phrase in the fifth line of the original should not have been translated agreeably to Brunck's interpretation. Mr. Mitchell has himself translated *τῇ πόλει γὰρ ἄξιον* (v. 205) agreeably to the sense which is always implied by the word *ἄξιος* when followed by a dative case; "what is necessary for," "advantageous to," though he has at the same time with great good taste preserved the tinge of associated meaning derived from its more general use, and which is always found to adhere to a word when employed in a sense remote from its habitual meaning.

τῇ πόλει γὰρ ἄξιον.

It concerns her pride and honour that our town his motions know.

In this instance the strict grammatical import of the word ἄξιος,[1] and the associated impression connected with it, are very happily reconciled. We think that in v. 3 the same combination have been effected with the same felicity, and that at any rate the real and strict sense of the passage ought at least to be discoverable in the translation. In the next line, it appears as if the translator had not perceived the humour of the original, and the double sense in which the word τραγῳδικὸν "(tragical)" is employed. We will endeavour to make it more palpable by re-arranging and concentrating the passage. Dicæopolis says, "I met with a *tragical* misfortune lately, for I went to the theatre expecting to hear a *tragedy* of Æschylus's; and when I got there, they were going to act a new *tragedy* of Theognis's. Now that is what I call altogether quite a *tragical* disappointment."

In verses 17 and 18 of the original, the translator (if we understand rightly the sense of his note) seems to be of opinion that the humour of the passage consists in the want of connection between the proposition and its antecedent; but Dicæopolis is not, we conceive, *complaining of the dust*, either in jest or earnest. The whole passage appears to be a metaphor, drawn from one of *the Miseries of Human Life* in Athens, when persons bathing, and sprinkled with an alkaline powder in the bath, had the misfortune to get it into their eyes: children (whose skins did not require the same process) were exempt from this inconvenience, hence he says ἐξ ὅτου. On turning to Brunck's interpretation we find this sense recognised in the word *lixivium*—we again turn to the translator's note; but neither in the note nor the translation can we discover anything which explains the metaphor; or which even implies that the passage is altogether a metaphorical one. It is possible that this may be a fault of misexplanation, rather than of misconception; but in either case, the result of embarrassment and disappointment to the reader remains the same. It is, after all, one of those many expressions which are best represented by an equivalent.

[1] The real meaning of the word is *what is called for*. We are inclined to believe with Mr. Whiter, that there is no Greek verb which may not be followed through its various significations by a radical form in our own language; ἀξιόω, the verb, though apparently derived from the adjective, retains the primary sense, and signifies to *ask*, or, as we find it in old language, to *axe*.

We do not mean to pursue this minute species of remark any further; we might have objected to the translation of the word *παρέκυψε*, as if expressing a continued attitude instead of a momentary action; but taking the line—

That fellow, Chæris, stooping, Sirs, and slouching,

as an amplification, sufficiently in harmony with the intention of the author, and characteristic of the appearance of a person performing on such an instrument, we are unwilling to object to it, though we wish that the strict sense (which we conceive to be that of unexpected and inopportune "appearance") had been preserved at the same time. We should, however, leave our readers under a false impression of the merits of this translation if they should infer that defects similar to those which we have noticed occur in the same proportion in other parts of the work; it is unfortunate that they should present themselves in the first pages, and we therefore suggest them for reconsideration in a future edition—*ἀρχομένου δ' ἔργου πρόσωπον χρὴ θέμεν τηλαυγές.*

We shall take our leave of the long soliloquy upon which we have hitherto animadverted by inserting the concluding lines, which ("excepting as before excepted") appear to us to be very happily translated.

For my part, Sirs, sure as the morning comes,
So sure am I the first at the assembly.
Solus cum solo there I take my seat;
At first I groan a little,—then I yawn
A little,—stretch a little,—hawk a little:—
Then comes a fit of vapours,—then I fall
To tracing figures in the sand, or pluck
An idle hair or so, or puzzle me
In sums and items of Arithmetic;
While ever and anon I cast an eye
Upon the blooming fields, and breathe a prayer
Of earnestness for peace. As for the town,—
Fogs and east winds light on't!—I lack of nothing
But my snug country-box and pleasant acres.
No talk from them of buying coals and oil
And vinegar; *buy! buy!* thank heaven the word's
Unknown to them, they yield their produce all
For nothing, they: nor ever stoop to twit me
With that cursed *by-word, buy*. Here then come I—
Hands, feet, and lungs prepared; and if a word
Our orators let fall, save what pertains
To peace, I'll raise a storm of words, and rain
A very tempest of abuse upon them!

We may appear, perhaps, too minute in our criticism, but the words "snug country-box" do not quite satisfy us. A "snug country-box" conveys the idea of a place of occasional retirement for a person whose occupation and resources are fixed in a neighbouring city; it implies no connection with agriculture as a means of subsistence to the occupant. But Dicæopolis is lamenting the loss of his entire livelihood, his farm, not the mere convenience of a villa; a single word ill chosen is often sufficient, as in the present instance, to impair materially the breadth and harmony of a beautiful passage.[1]

We select with pleasure, and without any drawback of criticism, a Semi-Chorus characteristic of the patriotic inveteracy and vehemence of the Old Acharnians, in pursuit of poor Dicæopolis, who has been detected in concluding a separate peace.

Toil and search are in vain,
He is gone—fled amain.
Now shame to my age,
And to life's parting stage.
Other tale it had been,
When my years were yet green,
And my youth in her pride
Followed fast at the side
Of Phayllus the racer!
A fleet-going pacer,
Though coals a full sack
Press'd hard at my back.
Then had not this maker
Of peace, and a breaker
With his best friends, I ween,
Long space put between
His country's undoer
And me his pursuer,
Nor should we thus part
For a leap and a start.

Dicæopolis, after an altercation in long trochaics, some of which are most admirably translated, "makes a voluntary proposal: a block is to be brought forward, and if he cannot justify himself for having entered into this separate treaty of peace with the enemies of his country, his head is to pay the forfeit of his indiscretion. Such is the homeliness of humour

[1] The first origin of a phrase will always continue to mark its character. A citizen becomes the proprietor of a villa; he does not choose that his opulence should be estimated by the scale of his new purchese; he therefore applies a disqualifying term to it—"a mere box," "my box in the country."

with which the countrymen of Pericles and Plato were to be cheated into their proper interests."

We think that in the concluding observation the translator gives up the cause of his client rather too easily. We have little doubt that this incident is a mere burlesque of a rhetorical scene, in one of the many tragedies of Euripides of which we know nothing, in which the preparations for execution were made on the stage, and in the presence of the hero who was to harangue for his life.

In Dicæopolis's harangue which follows, the sense of the word *ἐνασπιδώσομαι* seems to have escaped Brunck and the present translator; the former interprets it "*clypeo me non muniam hercle*"; the true version would have been "*intra clypeum non me continebo*"; the metaphor is taken from a military phrase expressing the behaviour of a cowardly soldier, who is contented with lying snug behind his own shield, without venturing to expose himself by attacking the enemy in return. This interpretation agrees perfectly with the context, the tenor of which implies that the future harangue is intended to be accusatory rather than exculpatory.

The prefatory discourse terminates to Dicæopolis's advantage; he obtains permission to prepare for his defence, by equipping himself in a pathetical costume, which is to be borrowed from Euripides. His interview with Euripides follows; but the translation represents it to great disadvantage. It appears as if Dicæopolis, in applying to Euripides for assistance, began by wantonly affronting him; whereas the original expresses only the impertinence which involuntarily escapes from a man in an excess of eagerness and hurry. We shall attempt to make our meaning more intelligible by a loose imitation. "Oh dear! Euripides, what, you're there, are you? You're writing your tragedies upstairs? You write them there always? Always upstairs in the garret, hah! You prefer it to the ground floor? Well, now, is it not You? an't you the Man that makes those tragedies with the cripples and the lame characters? Ah, if you had but a suit of tatters, belonging to one of your old tragedies, that you would lend me, to make me look pathetic! You're the poet, an't you, that makes the tragedies with the beggars in them?"

The interview which Dicæopolis enters upon thus blunderingly and abruptly, terminates to his satisfaction; he procures

a complete tragical equipment, and returns to make his defence. At the close the Chorus are divided in opinion; they form themselves into a double Semi-Chorus, and commence a scuffle. When *Lamachus* arrives, he (of course, as a soldier) takes part against Dicæopolis, and a personal struggle (which is marked in the original, v. 590) takes place between them. Lamachus's military assault is baffled by some knack in wrestling, characteristic of his rustic opponent; and they proceed to dispute, in a tone which implies an ascendancy on the part of Dicæopolis; his arguments are directed to captivate the favour of the Chorus, composed (as their names indicate) of the charcoal-burners of Acharnæ—Prinides, Marilades, etc. He addresses them in the lowest style of popular rhetoric.

Why should not they be employed in Commands and Embassies?—They are old enough; they are steady, honest, industrious men—why should Lamachus, and the other showy expensive young fellows monopolise all the salaried offices and employments?

Lamachus is worked up to a fury by this discourse, and departs. But why (it may be asked) should Aristophanes have put topics of such extravagant low democracy into the mouth of his principal character?—We cannot help thinking that in this passage there is a spirit of deep and bitter irony;—we will suppose *Lamachus* himself, the individual *Lamachus*, to have asked the question of the author.

L. Well, Aristophanes, I have not seen you, I think, since your last comedy.—You have made very good fun of me; but there is nothing I ought to take amiss—nothing degrading in it, as far as I am concerned.

A. I am glad you think so—it is not very easy to hit that precise point—it cost me some trouble, I assure you.

L. But why should you make your friend Dicæopolis talk such low vulgar trash to the Chorus; as if men without birth or education were as well fitted for public employment as persons of my sort? We have had a good education, at least, and are used to live in a liberal society:—it seems so contrary to your principles, that I am at a loss to comprehend your drift.

A. Then I will tell you; it is precisely the men of your sort (the young rising promising set) that have brought us into our present difficulties.—Pericles was employing the public resources splendidly and usefully—embellishing the city; giving occupation to a multitude of the poorer class; creating future resources for us; and (as he thought) strengthening his own interest, by the patronage attached to this peaceful harmless sort of expenditure. But he and his administration were grown old;—a new generation had sprung up, who thought themselves active enough and clever enough to begin fingering the public money. They could not endure that the whole public expenditure should pass directly from Pericles's

hands, to be distributed among mere architects and artists and mechanics. The young rising political and military geniuses (precisely the men of your sort) felt it as a kind of contempt that he should presume to govern without their participation or assistance. His scheme of policy was deficient in point of office and salary for persons of their description. They began, therefore, by attacking the system; Phidias was accused and ruined, and he himself was threatened with opposition at the approaching audit of his accounts; finally, he was driven to a compromise, and was obliged to make war, in order to have the means of stopping your mouths with appointments and commissions.—I have seen all this; and now, I see you (the very same young gentlemen) extremely indignant at finding yourselves occasionally hustled and jostled and ousted in your contests for office, by the very individual ragamuffins who were your agents among the populace at the time when you succeeded in raising an uproar against Pericles. Now, for my own part, I feel quite incapable of sympathising with those exalted and indignant sentiments; I prefer you (no doubt) to your new rivals; but whenever they happen to get the better of you, I console myself with the reflection that your present mortifications are the results of your own measures—that you have, in fact, nothing to complain of, except that you are deprived (perhaps with some mortifying circumstances) of the fruits of your own unjustifiable policy.—And lastly; that after all, the remedy is in your own hands; if you will unite yourselves to make a peace, your own salaries, and this offensive rivalry on the part of your inferiors, will cease together at once, and so I think Dicæopolis has told you (v. 619).

We shall now close our account of the *Acharnæ;* but we shall first extract a burlesque lyrical passage which appears to us perfectly well translated.

> O, for a muse of fire,
> Of true Acharnian breed!
> A muse that might some strain inspire,
> Brightness, tone and voice supplying,
> Like sparks which, when our fish are frying,
> The windy breath of bellows raise
> From forth the sturdy holm-oak's blaze:
> What time our cravings to supply,
> Some sift the meal and some the Thrasian mixture try.

We do not mean to enter so much at length into the examination of the *Knights* (or *Demagogues*, as they are more properly called). We shall content ourselves with noticing a few oversights not peculiar to the present translator. In the first scene, there is a manifest tone of drunkenness in Demosthenes's part, it is the caricaturist's mark by which he indicates that the figure on the stage is meant to represent Demosthenes—timidity and superstition, in like manner, serve to mark out Nicias—just as, in the caricatures of fifty years ago, a fox's tail projecting between the flaps of a full dressed coat supplied the defective resemblance of a young

orator. The poet follows the rule of association, which is more suited to burlesque than the law of cause and effect. Demosthenes is represented drinking on the stage, but the tone of drunkenness begins as soon as he begins to talk about drinking:

> The verse too stammers and the line is drunk.
> Ὁρᾷς . . . ὅταν πίνουσιν ἄνθρωποι . . . τότε . . .

observe, too, the similar endings in the following lines perfectly suited to express the pronunciation of a drunken man.

According to the same rule, the poet, before he leaves the stage, has no scruple in representing him as sober and even eloquent. It is usual with Aristophanes, in the first instance, to mark the person; and afterwards to modify him. Thus Don Quixote, in the first chapters, is a mere madman; towards the conclusion he is modified, and becomes a vehicle for communicating many of the author's own sentiments and opinions. We shall now extract some lines of the attack upon Cleon, which appear to be admirably well translated.

> Where's the officer at audit but has felt your cursed gripe?
> Squeezed and tried with nice discernment, whether yet the wretch be ripe.
> Like the men our figs who gather, you are skilful to discern,
> Which is green and which is ripe, and which is just upon the turn.
> Is there one well-pursed among us, lamb-like both in heart and life,
> Link'd and wedded to retirement, hating business, hating strife?
> Soon your greedy eye's upon him—when his mind is least at home,—
> Room and place—from farthest Thrace, at your bidding he must come.
> Foot and hand are straight upon him—neck and shoulder in your grip,
> To the ground anon he's thrown, and you smite him on the hip.

In the passage which follows, "*old* deeds of valour" is a most unlucky epithet. The party opposed to Cleon had been lately much strengthened in popularity and influence by the result of the expedition to Corinth. Cleon was aware of it—and (as it appears by this passage) had been truckling to them and began talking about "his intention of proposing a proposal for a plan for erecting a monument in memory of the event." In the last two lines of the original there is a studied vagueness of expression.

In verse 327, ὁ δ' Ἱπποδάμου λείβεται θεώμενος, Brunck translates *liquitur lacrimis*, and the present translator has adopted the same sense. We would rather follow the scholiast,

who thinks that a slap is given to Hippodamus, by the bye—the phrase should seem equivalent to τάκεται ὀφθαλμοὺς, not as expressing *sorrow*, but *envious longing*.[1] At line 450, the translator observes:

> If the reader should think that the abuse of this pair has reached its climax, he has yet to learn the perseverance and extent of Grecian invective —the two rivals compass half the circle of Grecian science for terms of reproach, before they conclude;—the builder's art, the power of the nail and the hammer, the glue-pot, the carpenter's yard, the art of running and casting metal, the crafts of the founder, the brazier, the cheesemonger, and the currier, all furnish terms which render their sarcasms more poignant and alternately turn the tide of victory.

This, we think, is an imperfect view of the subject; in the passage, the omission of which is supplied by this observation, it is evidently the object of the poet to mark a departure from the ancient decorum of public oratory, by an affectation of employing metaphors derived from the mechanical arts. A similar style of affected homeliness has occasionally been in fashion in parliamentary speaking, and would furnish sufficient equivalents for a translation.

But an example is more satisfactory, and commonly more concise, than an explanation. We shall endeavour to give the passage according to our notion of the poet's intention.

CLEON says:

> By the Holy Goddess, it's not new to me,
> This scheme of yours—I've known the job long since,
> The measurement and the scantling of it all,
> And where it was shaped out and tack'd together.
> [*The Chorus are alarmed at this new vein of popular metaphor, and encourage their advocate to do his best in the same style.*
> *Ch.* Ah, there it is!—you must exert yourself,
> Come, try to match him again with a carpenter's phrase.
> *Sausage-seller.* Does he think I have not track'd him in his intrigues
> At Argos? his pretence to make a treaty
> With the people there, and his clandestine meetings
> With the Spartans? Then he works and blows the coals,
> And has plenty of other irons in the fire.
> *Chorus.* Well done! the blacksmith beats the carpenter.[2]

The contest in this instance is no longer a mere reciprocation of abuse and menace; it is an imitation of public oratory as infected and debased by vulgar jargon. What follows is

[1] Hence you squeeze and drain alone the rich milch kine of our allies,
While the son of Hippodamus licks his lips with longing eyes.

[2] This again is from Mr. Frere's own version.

in the same style, and is still more evidently an imitation of the accusatory and menacing style of the orators at that time, when actually speaking before the people. We should suspect that the Sausage-seller's style was copied from "*Hyperbolus's vein.*"

But our readers, if they have followed us thus far, will be glad to turn to a very beautiful specimen of Mr. Mitchell's translation, in which the higher and more austere lyrical poetry is imitated with a slight infusion of burlesque.

Lord of the Waters! king of might,
Whose eyes and ears take stern delight
From neighing steeds and stormy fight
And galley swift pursuing;

From starting car and chariot gay,
And contests on that festive day,
When Athens' sprightly youth display
Their pride and their—undoing;

Lord of the dolphins and the spear—
Gerænstian—Sunian—or more dear,
If Cronus' name salute thy ear,
And Phormion's gallant daring;

O come amongst us in thy power,
Great Neptune; in her trying hour
Athens knows none so swift to shower
Aids of immortal bearing.

In v. 595 of the original, the translator very justly controverts the opinion of Casaubon as to the intention of the poet in this burlesque description of the expedition to Corinth. The truth seems to be that neither compliment nor censure was intended. Aristophanes was the poetical advocate of his party; it was his business to serve them by bringing their merits to the recollection of his audience, and he thought that this might be done more effectually and less invidiously in the fanciful style of humour which he has here adopted. His statement of the political character and merits of his clients was given distinctly in the Epirrema; here in the Antepirrema, it is enforced by example, but extravagantly and whimsically; in the first place, to avoid tediousness and uniformity; and secondly, from the consideration (manifest in the concluding lines of the Epirrema), that the party for which he was pleading was particularly obnoxious to popular disgust and envy. It would have been politic in Cleon, as

their adversary, to tempt them to acquiesce in an offensive display of their services by a public monument. Their advocate, on the contrary (but from the same considerations), makes his poetic record as humorous and as inoffensive as possible. The Chorus, composed of knights, could hardly have been allowed seriously to celebrate their own exploits.

We shall here insert, as a curious scene in itself, and as a fair specimen of the translation, the Sausage-seller's narrative of his contest with Cleon before the senate, with the chorus of congratulation on his success:

Straight as he went from hence, I clapt all sail
And follow'd close behind. Within I found him
Launching his bolts and thunder-driving words,
Denouncing all the Knights, as traitors, vile
Conspirators—jags, crags, and masses huge
Of stone were nothing to the monstrous words
His foaming mouth heaved up. All these to hear
Did the grave Council seriously incline;
They love a tale of scandal to their hearts,
And his had been as quick in birth as golden-herb.
Mustard was in their faces, and their brows
With frowns were furrow'd up. I saw the storm,
Mark'd how his words had sunk upon them, taking
Their very senses prisoners:—and, oh!
In knavery's name, thought I,—by all the fools
And scrubs and rogues and scoundrels in the town,—
By that same forum, where my early youth
Received its first instruction, let me gather
True courage now: be oil upon my tongue,
And shameless Impudence direct my speech.
Just as these thoughts pass'd over me, I heard
A sound of thunder pealing on my right—
I mark'd the omen,—grateful, kiss'd the ground—
And pushing briskly thro' the lattice-work—
Raised my voice to its highest pitch, and thus
Began upon them—" Messieurs of the Senate,
I bring good news, and hope your favour for it.
Anchovies, such as since the war began
Ne'er cross'd my eyes for cheapness, do this day
Adorn our markets"—at the words a calm
Came over every face, and all was hush'd—
A crown was voted me upon the spot.
Then I (the thought was of the moment's birth),
Making a mighty secret of it, bade them
Put pots and pans in instant requisition,
And then—one obol loads you with anchovies,
Said I: anon most violent applause,
And clapping hands ensued; and every face
Grew unto mine, gaping in idiot vacancy.
My Paphlagonian discern'd the humour
O' the time; and seeing how the members all
Were tickled most with words, thus utter'd him:

" Sirs—Gentlemen—'tis my good will and pleasure,
That for this kindly news we sacrifice
One hundred oxen to our patron-goddess."
Straight the tide turn'd; each head within the Senate
Nodded assent and warm good-will to Cleon:
" What! Shall a little bull-flesh gain the day? "
Thought I within me: then aloud, and shooting
Beyond his mark:—" I double, sirs, this vote,—
Nay more, sirs, should to-morrow's sun see sprats
One hundred to the penny sold, I move
That we make offering of a thousand goats
Unto Diana."—Every head was raised;
And all turn'd eyes incontinent on me.
This was a blow he ne'er recover'd: straight
He fell to muttering fooleries and words
Of no account—the chairmen and the officers
Were now upon him.—All meantime was uproar
In th' Assembly—Nought talk'd of but anchovies.—
How fared our statesman? he with suppliant tones
Begg'd a few moments' pause.—" Rest ye, sirs, rest ye
Awhile—I have a tale will pay the hearing—
A herald is arrived from Sparta, claiming
An audience—he brings terms of peace, and craves
Your leave to utter them before ye." " Peace! "
Cried all (their voices one), " is this a time
To talk of peace?—out, dotard! What, the rogues
Have heard the price anchovies bear!—marry—
Our needs, sir, ask not peace.—War, war, for us,
And, chairmen, break the assembly up." 'Twas done,
Upon their bidding, straight—who might oppose
Such clamour?—then, what haste and expedition
On every side! one moment clears the rails!
I the meantime steal privately away
And buy me all the leeks and coriander
In the market—these I straight make largess of,
And gratis give as sauce to dress their fish.
Who may recount the praises infinite
And groom-like courtesies this bounty gain'd me!
In short you see a man, that for one pennyworth
Of coriander vile has purchased him
An entire senate—not a man among them
But is at my behest and does me reverence.

It will readily be imagined that this speech elicits a song of applause from the delighted CHORUS.

Chorus. Well, my son, hast thou begun, and well hast thou competed;
Rich bliss and gain wilt thou attain, thy mighty task completed.

He, thy rival, shall admire,
Choked with passion, pale with ire,
Thy audacity and fire:
He shall own, abash'd, in thee
Power and peerless mastery
In the crafts and tricks that be.
At all points art thou equipt,
Eye and tongue with treachery tipt,
Soul and body both are dipt
In deceit and knavery.

Forward, son of mine, undaunted—complete thy bold beginning:
No aid from me shall be delay'd—which may the prize be winning.

The passage, from the sixth to the twelfth line of the Chorus, is, we think, in the true tone which should belong to the choruses of this extraordinary play. In the three first especially:

He shall own, abash'd, in thee
Power and peerless mastery
In all crafts and tricks that be—

Mr. Mitchell has hit the very key-note of Aristophanes, whose choruses throughout this play are contrived to afford a relief and contrast to the vulgar acrimony of his dialogue; not in their logical and grammatical sense, but in their form and rhythm, and in the selection of the words; which, if heard imperfectly, would appear to belong (as in the present instance) to a grave, or tender, or beautiful subject.

We may except from this general observation the first chorus, Ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ βδελυρὲ, as it forms a transition from the eager and vehement part which the chorus has taken just before. This also is translated by Mr. Mitchell with great power and effect.

Cho. Wretch! without a parallel—
Son of thunder—child of hell,—
Creature of one mighty sense,
Concentrated impudence!—
From earth's centre to the sea,
Nature stinks of that and thee.
It stalks at the bar,
It lurks at the tolls;
In th' Assembly, black war
And defiance it rolls.
It speaks to our ears
In an accent of thunder;
It climbs to the spheres
And rives heaven asunder.
Athens deafens at the sound in her ears still drumming;
While seated high,
You keep an eye
Upon the tolls, like those who spy
If tunny-fish be coming.

Having extracted already the contest between Cleon and his adversary in the senate, we shall subjoin a part of their

subsequent altercation before the assembly of the people, personified in the character of Demus.

Cl. (*to Demus*). For service and zeal I to facts, sir, appeal:
say of all that e'er sway'd this proud city,
Who had ever more skill your snug coffer to fill,
undisturb'd by respectance or pity?
For one and for two I've the rope and the screw,
to a third I make soft supplication;
And I spurn at all ties, and all laws I despise,
so that Demus find gratification.
Saus. Mere smoke this and dust! Demus, take it on trust,
that my service and zeal can run faster:
I am he that can steal at the mouth a man's meal,
and set it before my own master.
Other proofs than of love in this knave's grate and stove,
noble lord, may your eyes be discerning:
There the coal and the fuel that should warm your own gruel,
to your slave's ease and comfort are burning.
Nay, since Marathon's day, when thy sword (*to Demus*) paved
the way to Persia's disgrace and declension,
(That bountiful mint in which bards without stint
fashion words of six-footed dimension),
Like a stone or a stock, hast not sat on a rock,
cold, comfortless, bare and derided:—
While this chief of the land never yet to your hand
a cushion or seat hath provided?
But take this (*giving a cushion*) to the ease of your hams and
your knees: for since Salamis' proud day of story,
With a fleet ruin-hurl'd, they took rank in the world,
and should seat them in comfort and glory.
Dem. What vision art thou! let me read on thy brow,
what lineage and kindred have won thee!
Thou wert born for my weal, and the impress and seal
of Harmodius are surely upon thee.
Cleon (*mortified*). O feat easy done! and is Demus thus won
by diminutive gifts and oblations?
Saus. Small my baits I allow, but in size they outgo
your own little douceurs and donations.
Cl. (*fiercely*). Small or great be my bait, ne'er my boast I abate,
but for proof head and shoulders I offer,
That in act and in will to Demus here still
a love unexampled I proffer.
Saus. (*dactylics*). You proffer love indeed! you that have seen him
bleed;
buffing and roughing it years twice four;
A tub-and-cask tenant,—vulture-lodged—sixth-floor man;
batter'd and tatter'd, and bruised and sore!
There was he pent and shent with a most vile intent,
his milk and honey sweet from him to squeeze;
Pity none e'er he won, tho' the smoke pinch'd his eyes,
and his sweet wine it was drawn to the lees.
When Archeptolemus lately brought PEACE to us:
who but you (*to Cleon*) scatter'd and scared the virgin,
While your foot rudely placed, where Honour's soul is cased,
spurn'd at all such as acceptance were urging?

Cl. (*fawning*). And, my good sir, the cause?—Marry that Demus' laws
Greece universal might obey:
Oracles here have I, and they in verity
bear that this lord of ours must hold sway,
Judging in Arcady, and for his salary,
earning him easily a five-obol coin.
Let him but wait his fate; and in meantime his state,
food and support shall be care of mine.

Upon the whole, the specimens of lyrical execution which we have given above will justify us in venturing the opinion (which Goldsmith's friend suggested to the travelling connoisseur as a safe one in all cases), that "the picture would have been better, if the painter had taken more pains." There is evidently a very just comprehension of the intended effect of the original, and a full power of expressing it, but this power is not uniformly exerted. With respect to the dialogue, we have already noticed the defects which are inseparable from an obsolete and unfamiliar language, and which, in our opinion, would make it impossible for any talent to produce an adequate representation of Aristophanes in a style so unsuited to this species of Comedy. This, however, is an estimate of the work merely as compared with the original;—as compared with former translations, it stands on the highest ground—and even the original does not, at the first perusal, reveal to the young student so much, perhaps, as the mere English reader may collect from Mr. Mitchell's translation. His estimate of the character of his author, as detailed in the Preliminary Dissertation, is (in our opinion) perfectly correct and curious, and interesting in the highest degree.

The notes, though we have pointed out one or two slight defects, are in general spirited, judicious, and learned:—and even if we were inclined to attribute to the translator a degree of poetical merit much inferior to that which he may justly claim, we should still consider British literature as under the highest obligations to him, for an addition of such a mass of curious, interesting, and instructive matter; which has hitherto been inaccessible and which is now laid open to every English reader, to a point beyond which many professed scholars have not thought it worth their while to proceed. Since the publication of Mr. Mitford, nothing has appeared so calculated to convey a true impression of the character of

antiquity, or to efface those theatrical and pedantic notions, which are become the source not only of infinite absurdity and distortion of mind among scholars, but of much practical mischief and error, in proportion as the blunders of the learned are diffused among the vulgar.

English Translations of works and of two or more plays: T. Mitchell (four plays), 1820-22; J. W. Warter (four plays), 1830; C. A. Wheelwright, 1837; B. D. Walsh (three plays), 1837; W. J. Hickie (from Dindorf's text), Bohn, 1848, etc.; J. H. Frere (Acharnians, Knights, Birds), 1839, 1840; L. H. Rudd (eight plays), 1867; with occasional comments by J. H. Frere and introduction by Morley (three plays), Morley's Universal Library, 1886; B. B. Rogers (Gr. and Eng.), 1902, etc.; World's Classics (four plays by J. H. Frere), introduction by W. W. Merry, 1907; New Universal Library (five plays, translation, and essay on Aristophanic Comedy by J. H. Frere), 1908; see also Lubbock's Hundred Best Books, No. 69 (Frere's translation of Aristophanes, with plays by Sophocles and Euripides by other translators); Selections from Aristophanes with notes. A. Sidgwick, 1871, 1876-79. Other translations of single plays.

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THE FROGS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BACCHUS.
XANTHIAS, *servant of Bacchus.*
HERCULES.
CHARON.
ÆACUS.
EURIPIDES.
ÆSCHYLUS.
PLUTO.
DEAD MAN.
PROSERPINE'S SERVANT MAID.
TWO WOMEN SUTLERS.
MUTES.
CHORUS OF VOTARIES, *and*
FROGS.

THE ARGUMENT

Bacchus, the patron of the stage, in despair at the decline of the dramatic art (which had lately been deprived of its best tragic authors, Sophocles and Euripides), determines to descend the infernal regions with the intention of procuring the release of Euripides. He appears accordingly, equipped for the expedition, with the lion's skin and club (in imitation of Hercules, whose success in a similar adventure has encouraged him to the attempt); he still retains, however, his usual effeminate costume, which forms a contrast with these heroic attributes. Xanthias, his slave (like Silenus, the mythologic attendant of Bacchus), is mounted upon an ass; but, in conformity with the practice of other human slaves when attending their mortal masters upon an earthly journey, he carries a certain pole upon his shoulder, at the ends of which the various packages, necessary for his master's accommodation, are suspended in equilibrio. The first scene (which, if it had not been the first, might perhaps have been omitted) contains a censure of the gross taste of the audience (suitable to the character of Bacchus as patron of the stage) with allusions to some contemporary rival authors, who submitted to court the applause of the vulgar by mere buffoonery.—The argument between Bacchus and Xanthias, at the end of this scene, probably contains some temporary allusion now unknown, but is obviously, and in the first place, a humorous exemplification of the philosophical, verbal sophisms, not, in all probability, new, even then, but which were then, for the first time, introduced in Athens, and which may be traced from thence to the schoolmen of the middle ages. Xanthias carries the bundles *passivè* et *formaliter*, the ass carries them *activè* et *materialiter*.

THE FROGS

BACCHUS. XANTHIAS.

Xan. Master, shall I begin with the usual jokes
That the audience always laugh at?
Bac. If you please;
Any joke you please except "being overburthen'd."
—Don't use it yet—We've time enough before us.
Xan. Well, something else that's comical and clever?
Bac. I forbid being "overpress'd and overburthen'd."
Xan. Well, but the drollest joke of all—?
Bac. Remember
There's one thing I protest against—
Xan. What's that?
Bac. Why, shifting off your load to the other shoulder,
And fidgeting and complaining of the gripes.
Xan. What then do you mean to say, that I must not say
That I'm ready to befoul myself?
Bac. (*peremptorily*). By no means—
Except when I take an emetic.[1]
Xan. (*in a sullen, muttering tone, as if resentful of hard usage*).
What's the use, then,
Of my being burthen'd here with all these bundles,
If I'm to be deprived of the common jokes [2]
That Phrynichus, and Lycis, and Ameipsias
Allow the servants always in their comedies,
Without exception, when they carry bundles?
Bac. Pray, leave them off—for those ingenious sallies
Have such an effect upon my health and spirits
That I feel grown old and dull when I get home.
Xan. (*as before, or with a sort of half-mutinous whine*).
It's hard for me to suffer in my limbs,
To be overburthen'd and debarr'd from joking.

[1] As a filthy joke might assist the operation of the medicine.
[2] Xanthias considers these jokes as the lawful vails and perquisites of servants on such occasions.

Bac. Well, this is monstrous, quite, and insupportable!
Such insolence in a servant! When your master
Is going afoot and has provided you
With a beast to carry ye.
Xan. What! do I carry nothing?
Bac. You're carried yourself.
Xan. But I carry bundles, don't I?
Bac. But the beast bears all the burdens that you carry.
Xan. Not those that I carry myself—'tis I that carry 'em.
Bac. You're carried yourself, I tell ye.
Xan. I can't explain it,
But I feel it in my shoulders plainly enough.
Bac. Well, if the beast don't help you, take and try;
Change places with the ass and carry him.
Xan. (*in a tone of mere disgust*).
Oh, dear! I wish I had gone for a volunteer,[1]
And left you to yourself. I wish I had.
Bac. Dismount, you rascal! Here, we're at the house
Where Hercules lives.—Holloh! there! who's within there

[*Bacchus kicks outrageously at the do*

HERCULES. BACCHUS. XANTHIAS.

Her. Who's there? (He has bang'd at the door, whoever he
With the kick of a centaur.)[2] What's the matter, there?
Bac. (*aside*). Ha! Xanthias!
Xan. What?
Bac. (*aside*). Did ye mind how he was frighten'd?
Xan. I suppose he was afraid you were going mad.
Her. (*aside*). By Jove! I shall laugh outright; I'm ready
burst.
I shall laugh, in spite of myself, upon my life.

[*Hercules shifts about, and turns aside to disguise*
laughter: this apparent shyness confirms Bacchus in
opinion of his own ascendancy, which he manife
accordingly.

Bac. (*with a tone of protection*).

[1] Xanthias is wearied out by mere petulance and folly, not with h
usage. Numbers of the slaves at that time had been enfranchised
condition of naval service.

[2] The expression is characteristic, the Centaur being a familiar be
to Hercules.

Come hither, friend.—What ails ye? Step this way;
I want to speak to ye.

Her. (*with a good-humoured, but unsuccessful endeavour to suppress laughter, or to conceal it. Suppose him, for instance, speaking with his hand before his mouth*).
But I can't help laughing,
To see the lion's skin with a saffron robe,
And the club with the women's sandals—altogether—
What's the meaning of it all? Have you been abroad?

Bac. I've been abroad—in the Fleet—with Cleisthenes.

Her. (*sharply and ironically*). You fought—?

Bac. (*briskly and sillily*). Yes, that we did—we gain'd a victory;
And we sunk the enemies' ships—thirteen of 'em.

Her. "So you woke at last and found it was a dream?"[1]

Bac. But aboard the fleet, as I pursued my studies,
I read the tragedy of Andromeda;[2]
And then such a vehement passion struck my heart,
You can't imagine.

Her. A small one, I suppose,
My little fellow—a moderate little passion?

Bac. (*ironically: the irony of imbecility*).
It's just as small as Molon is—that's all—
Molon the wrestler, I mean—as small as he is—[3]

Her. Well, what was it like? what kind of a thing? what was it?

Bac. (*meaning to be very serious and interesting*).
No, friend, you must not laugh; it's past a joke;
It's quite a serious feeling—quite distressing;
I suffer from it—

Her. (*bluntly*). Well, explain. What was it?

Bac. I can't declare it at once; but I'll explain it
Theatrically and enigmatically:
[*With a buffoonish assumption of tragic gesture and emphasis.*
Were you ever seized with a sudden passionate longing
For a mess of porridge?

Her. Often enough, if that's all.

Bac. Shall I state the matter to you plainly at once;

[1] A proverbial sarcasm, by which the auditor of an improbable story affects to suppose that the narrator has been relating a dream.
[2] A play of Euripides.
[3] Molon was remarkable for his bulk and stature.

Or put it circumlocutorily? [1]

Her. Not about the porridge. I understand your instance.

Bac. Such is the passion that possesses me
For poor Euripides, that's dead and gone;
And it's all in vain people trying to persuade me
From going after him.

Her. What, to the shades below?

Bac. Yes, to the shades below, or the shades beneath 'em,
To the undermost shades of all. I'm quite determined.

Her. But what's your object?

Bac. (*with a ridiculous imitation of tragical action and emphasis*).
Why my object is
That I want a clever poet—" for the good,
The gracious and the good, are dead and gone;
The worthless and the weak are left alive." [2]

Her. Is not Iophon a good one?—He's alive sure?

Bac. If he's a good one, he's our only good one;
But it's a question; I'm in doubt about him.[3]

Her. There's Sophocles; he's older than Euripides—
If you go so far for 'em, you'd best bring him.

Bac. No; first I'll try what Iophon [4] can do,
Without his father, Sophocles, to assist him.
—Besides, Euripides is a clever rascal;
A sharp, contriving rogue that will make a shift
To desert and steal away with me; the other
Is an easy-minded soul, and always was.

Her. Where's Agathon? [5]

Bac. He's gone and left me too,
Regretted by his friends; a worthy poet—

Her. Gone! Where, poor soul?

Bac. To the banquets of the blest!

Her. But then you've Xenocles [6]—

[1] A ridicule of the circuitous preambles to confidential communications in tragedy.

[2] The quotation is from Euripides.

[3] Upon the subject of his own profession, Bacchus talks in a tone approaching very nearly to sense and consistency, and is treated by Hercules with more respect.

[4] A tragic poet, the son of Sophocles, and supposed to have been assisted by him in the composition of his tragedies.

[5] A tragic poet, a young man of wealth and of refined habits, who had lately died at the court of Archelaus, whither he had retired from Athens.

[6] One of the theatric family of Carcinus, the constant butts of Aristophanes' humour.

Bac. Yes! a plague upon him!
Her. Pythangelus [1] too—
Xan. But nobody thinks of me;
Standing all this while with the bundles on my shoulder.
Her. But have not you other young ingenious youths
That are fit to out-talk Euripides ten times over;
To the amount of a thousand, at least, all writing tragedy—?
Bac. They're good for nothing—" Warblers of the Grove "—
—" Little, foolish, fluttering things "—poor puny wretches,
That dawdle and dangle about with the tragic muse;
Incapable of any serious meaning—
—There's not one hearty poet amongst them all
That's fit to risk an adventurous valiant phrase.
Her. How—" hearty? " What do you mean by " valiant phrases? "
Bac. (*the puzzle of a person who is called upon for a definition*).
I mean a . . . kind . . . of a . . . doubtful, bold expression
To talk about . . ." *The viewless foot of Time* "—
[*Tragic emphasis in the quotations.*
And . . ." *Jupiter's Secret Chamber in the Skies* "—
And about . . .[2] A person's soul . . . not being perjured
When . . . the tongue . . . forswears itself . . . in spite of the soul.
Her. Do you like that kind of stuff?
Bac. I'm crazy after it.
Her. Why, sure, it's trash and rubbish—Don't you think so?
Bac. " Men's fancies are their own—Let mine alone " [3]—
Her. But, in fact, it seems to me quite bad—rank nonsense.
Bac. You'll tell me next what I ought to like for supper.
Xan. But nobody thinks of me here, with the bundles.
Bac. (*with a careless, easy, voluble, degagé style*).
—But now to the business that I came upon—
[*Upon a footing of equality.—The tone of a person who is dispatching business off-hand, with readiness and unconcern.*
(With the apparel that you see—the same as yours)
To obtain a direction from you to your friends,

[1] An obscure writer of tragedies. The Scholiast notices the sarcastic effect of Xanthias's interruption.
[2] A confused, vulgarised recollection of Euripides. *The first citation is from Æschylus, the second from Sophocles, the third from Euripides.*
[3] Proverbial.

(To apply to them—in case of anything—
If anything should occur) the acquaintances
That received you there—(the time you went before
—For the business about Cerberus [1])—if you'd give me
Their names and their directions, and communicate
Any information relative to the country,
The roads,—the streets,—the bridges, and the brothels,
The wharfs,—the public walks,—the public houses,
The fountains,—aqueducts,—and inns, and taverns,
And lodgings,—free from bugs and fleas, if possible,
If you know any such—

Xan. But nobody thinks of me.

Her. What a notion! You! will you risk it? are you mad?

Bac. (*meaning to be very serious and manly*).
I beseech you say no more—no more of that,
But inform me briefly and plainly about my journey:
The shortest road and the most convenient one.

Her. (*with a tone of easy, indolent, deliberate banter*).
Well,—which shall I tell ye first, now?—Let me see now—
There's a good convenient road by the Rope and Noose;
The Hanging Road.

Bac. No; that's too close and stifling.

Her. Then, there's an easy, fair, well-beaten track,
As you go by the Pestle and Mortar—

Bac. What, the Hemlock?

Her. To be sure—

Bac. That's much too cold—it will never do.
They tell me it strikes a chill to the legs and feet.[2]

Her. Should you like a speedy, rapid, downhill road?

Bac. Indeed I should, for I'm a sorry traveller.

Her. Go to the Keramicus then.

Bac. What then?

Her. Get up to the very top of the tower.

Bac. What then?

Her. Stand there and watch when the Race of the Torch [3] begins;

[1] Hercules was employed by Eurystheus to drag up Cerberus from the gates of Hell. This adventure furnishes several incidents in the course of this play.

[2] The effects of the hemlock are thus described in Plato's account of the death of Socrates.

[3] A sacred race in honour of Minerva, Vulcan, and Prometheus. The runners carried a lighted torch.—A ludicrous description of it occurs further on towards the end of the Fourth Act.

And mind when you hear the people cry "*Start! start!*"
Then start at once with 'em.
Bac. Me? Start? Where from?
Her. From the top of the tower to the bottom.
Bac. No, not I.
It's enough to dash my brains out! I'll not go
Such a road upon any account.
Her. Well, which way then?
Bac. The way you went yourself.
Her. But it's a long one,
For first you come to a monstrous bottomless lake.
Bac. And what must I do to pass?
Her. You'll find a boat there;
A little tiny boat, as big as that,
And an old man that ferries you over in it,
Receiving twopence as the usual fee.
Bac. Ah! that same twopence [1] governs everything
Wherever it goes.—I wonder how it managed
To find its way there?
Her. Theseus introduced it.[2]
—Next you'll meet serpents, and wild beasts, and monsters,
[*Suddenly and with a shout in Bacchus's ear.*
Horrific to behold!
Bac. (*starting a little*). Don't try to fright me;
You'll not succeed, I promise you.—I'm determined.
Her. Then there's an abyss of mire and floating filth,
In which the damn'd lie wallowing and overwhelm'd;
The unjust, the cruel, and the inhospitable;
And the barbarous bilking Cullies that withhold
The price of intercourse with fraud and wrong;
The incestuous, and the parricides, and the robbers;
The perjurers, and assassins, and the wretches
That wilfully and presumptuously transcribe
Extracts and trash from Morsimus's plays.
Bac. And, by Jove! Cinesias with his Pyrrhic dancers
Ought to be there—they're worse, or quite as bad.

[1] Twopence, the salary of the poorer citizens who sat as jurymen, and who were in fact the arbiters of the lives and fortunes of their subjects and fellow-citizens.

[2] The Athenian hero, when his adventures led him to penetrate into the infernal regions, is supposed to have introduced the characteristic type of his native city.

Her. But after this your sense will be saluted
With a gentle breathing sound of flutes and voices,
And a beautiful spreading light like ours on earth,
And myrtle glades and happy quires among,
Of women and men with rapid applause and mirth.[1]
Bac. And who are all those folks?
Her. The initiated.
Xan. (*gives indications of restiveness, as if ready to throw down his bundles*).
I won't stand here like a mule in a procession
Any longer, with these packages and bundles.
Her. (*hastily, in a civil hurry, as when you shake a man by the hand, and shove him out of the room, and give him your best wishes and advice all at once*).
They'll tell you everything you want to know,
For they're established close upon the road,
By the corner of Pluto's house—so fare you well;
Farewell, my little fellow. [*Exit.*
Bac. (*pettishly*). I wish you better.
(*to Xanthias*) You, sirrah, take your bundles up again.
Xan. What, before I put them down?
Bac. Yes! now, this moment.
Xan. Nah! don't insist; there's plenty of people going
As corpses with the convenience of a carriage;
They'd take it for a trifle gladly enough.
Bac. But if we meet with nobody?
Xan. Then I'll take 'em.
Bac. Come, come, that's fairly spoken, and in good time;
For there they're carrying a corpse out to be buried.
[*A funeral, with a corpse on an open bier, crosses the stage.*
—Holloh! you there—you Deadman—can't you hear?
Would you take any bundles to hell with ye, my good fellow?
Deadman.[2] What are they?
Bac. These.
Deadman. Then I must have two drachmas.
Bac. I can't—you must take less.
Deadman. (*peremptorily*). Bearers, move on.

[1] A description of the existence allotted to those who had been initiated in the mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus.

[2] We collect from the Scholiast that the part of the Deadman was expressed with a tone of fastidious valetudinary languor.

Bac. No, stop! we shall settle between us—you're so hasty.
Deadman. It's no use arguing; I must have two drachmas.
Bac. (*emphatically and significantly*). Ninepence!
Deadman. I'd best be alive again at that rate. [*Exit.*
Bac. Fine airs the fellow gives himself—a rascal!
I'll have him punish'd, I vow, for overcharging.
Xan. Best give him a good beating: give me the bundles,
I'll carry 'em.
Bac. You're a good, true-hearted fellow;
And a willing servant.—Let's move on to the ferry.

The author has condescended to gratify the popular taste alluded to in the first scene, without intrenching upon the pure humour of his dialogue. Throughout the preceding scene, Xanthias acts a part in dumb show, exhibiting various attitudes and contortions of weariness and restlessness: his impatience breaks out in four interruptions, three of which are so managed as to produce a comic effect. In the first, Xanthias puts himself in a ridiculous juxtaposition with Pythangelus; the second terminates a discussion proverbially endless, and the last enables Hercules to put an end to a dialogue (which would otherwise have been too long) with an air of brevity and dispatch suited to his character. Hercules and Bacchus offer a contrast of the two extremes of manly and feeble character. Strength is represented in a state of calmness and playful repose, and feebleness in a paroxysm of occasional energy, conformably to the practice of ancient artists in their serious compositions.

The dialogue with the Deadman, besides its merit as an incomparable sample of humorous nonsense, has the advantage of introducing the spectators in imagination to the very suburbs of the infernal regions; for, if we look to the strict localities of the stage, nothing else intervenes between the dialogue at the door of Hercules's house (in Thebes, as the Scholiast supposes) and the passage of the Styx, which immediately follows.

CHARON. BACCHUS. XANTHIAS.

Char. Hoy! Bear a hand, there—Heave ashore.
Bac. What's this? [1]
Xan. The lake it is—the place he told us of.
By Jove! and there's the boat—and here's old Charon.
Bac. Well, Charon!—Welcome, Charon!—Welcome kindly!
Char. Who wants the ferryman? Anybody waiting
To remove from the sorrows of life? A passage anybody?
To Lethe's wharf?—to Cerberus's Reach?
To Tartarus?—to Tænarus?—to Perdition?
Bac. Yes, I.

[1] Alluding to the change of scene which took place at this moment.

Char. Get in then.
Bac. (*hesitatingly*). Tell me, where are you going?
To Perdition really—?
Char. (*not sarcastically, but civilly in the way of business*).
Yes, to oblige you, I will
With all my heart—Step in there.
Bac. Have a care!
Take care, good Charon!—Charon, have a care!
[*Bacchus gets into the boat.*
Come, Xanthias, come!
Char. I take no slaves aboard
Except they've volunteer'd for the naval victory.[1]
Xan. I could not—I was suffering with sore eyes.
Char. You must trudge away then, round by the end of the lake there.
Xan. And whereabouts shall I wait?
Char. At the Stone of Repentance,
By the Slough of Despond beyond the Tribulations;
You understand me?
Xan. Yes, I understand you;
A lucky, promising direction, truly.
Char. (*to Bac*). Sit down at the oar—Come quick, if there's more coming!
(*To Bac. again*) Holloh! what's that you're doing?
[*Bacchus is seated in a buffoonish attitude on the side of the boat where the oar was fastened.*
Bac. What you told me.
I'm sitting at the oar.
Char. Sit *there*, I tell you,
You Fatguts; that's your place.
Bac. (*changes his place*). Well, so I do.
Char. Now ply your hands and arms.
Bac. (*makes a silly motion with his arms*). Well, so I do.
Char. You'd best leave off your fooling. Take to the oar,
And pull away.
Bac. But how shall I contrive?
I've never served on board—I'm only a landsman;
I'm quite unused to it—
Char. We can manage it.

[1] The victory of Arginusæ, where the slaves who were enlisted fought for the first time.

As soon as you begin you shall have some music
That will teach you to keep time.
Bac. What music's that?
Char. A chorus of Frogs—uncommon musical Frogs.
Bac. Well, give me the word and the time.
Char. Whooh up, up; whooh up, up.

Chorus of Frogs.

This Chorus, from the clutter of cognate consonants, *g*, *k*, and *ch*, which appears in some parts of it, should seem to have been intended by the author as a caricature of some contemporary dramatical lyrics. With the assistance of the Northumbrian burr, some of the lines may be made to croak with very tolerable effect; others should seem intended as a contrast, and contain some pretty imagery.—The spelling of the words of the Chorus is accommodated to the actual pronunciation of the Frogs, which, it is presumed, has remained unaltered. The *B* in the Brekeke-kesh is very soft, and assimilates to the *V*. The *e* in kesh is pronounced like *ei* in leisure, and the last syllable prolonged and accented with a higher tone. The word, as commonly pronounced by scholars (with the ictus or English accent on the third syllable), bears no resemblance to the sound which it is meant to imitate; which has, on the contrary, a slight ictus on the first syllable.—The learned reader is requested to estimate the truth of this translation, not by direct collation with the text of the original, but by those impressions of its general spirit and effect which may remain in his memory, or (more fairly still) by a reference to the assignable or supposeable effects intended to be produced by the original.

Chorus.

Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash,
Shall the Choral Quiristers of the Marsh [1]
Be censured and rejected as hoarse and harsh;
  And their Chromatic essays
  Deprived of praise?
No, let us raise afresh
Our obstreperous Brekeke-kesh;
The customary croak and cry
  Of the creatures
  At the theatres,
In their yearly revelry,
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.
Bac. (*rowing in great misery*).
How I'm maul'd,
How I'm gall'd;

[1] The theatre of Bacchus in the marsh.—Anti-lyrical caricature.

Worn and mangled to a mash—
There they go! "*Koash, koash!*"—

Frogs. Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Bac. Oh, beshrew,
All your crew;
You don't consider how I smart.

Frogs. Now for a sample of the Art!
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Bac. I wish you hang'd, with all my heart.
—Have you nothing else to say?
"*Brekeke-kesh, koash*" all day!

Frogs. We've a right,
We've a right;
And we croak at ye for spite.
We've a right,
We've a right;
Day and night,
Day and night;
Night and day,
Still to creak and croak away.

Phœbus and every Grace
Admire and approve of the croaking race;[1]
And the egregious guttural notes
That are gargled and warbled in their lyrical throats.
In reproof
Of your scorn
Mighty Pan
Nods his horn;
Beating time
To the rhyme
With his hoof,
With his hoof.
Persisting in our plan,
We proceed as we began,
Breke-kesh,[2] Breke-kesh,
Kooash, kooash.

Bac. Oh, the Frogs, consume and rot 'em,
I've a blister on my bottom.

[1] Anti-lyrical caricature.
[2] The form of the chorus is here varied, to accommodate it to the rhythm of the preceding lines.

Hold your tongues, you tuneful creatures.
Frogs. Cease with your profane entreaties
All in vain for ever striving:
Silence is against our natures.
With the vernal heat reviving,
Our aquatic crew repair
From their periodic sleep,
In the dark and chilly deep,
To the cheerful upper air;
Then we frolic here and there
All amidst the meadows fair;
Shady plants of asphodel,
Are the lodges where we dwell;
Chaunting in the leafy bowers
All the livelong summer hours,
Till the sudden gusty showers
Send us headlong, helter, skelter,
To the pool to seek for shelter;
Meagre, eager, leaping, lunging,
From the sedgy wharfage plunging
To the tranquil depth below,
There we muster all a-row;
Where, secure from toil and trouble,
With a tuneful hubble-bubble,
Our symphonious accents flow.
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.
Bac. I forbid you to proceed.
Frogs. That would be severe indeed;
Arbitrary, bold, and rash—
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.
Bac. I command you to desist—
—Oh, my back, there! oh, my wrist!
What a twist!
What a sprain!
Frogs. Once again—
We renew the tuneful strain.
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.
Bac. I disdain—(Hang the pain!)
All your nonsense, noise, and trash.
Oh, my blister! Oh, my sprain!
Frogs. Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Friends and Frogs, we must display
All our powers of voice to-day;
Suffer not this stranger here,
With fastidious foreign ear,
To confound us and abash.
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Bac. Well, my spirit is not broke,
If it's only for the joke,
I'll outdo you with a croak.
Here it goes—(*very loud*) " Koash, koash."

Frogs. Now for a glorious croaking crash, [*Still louder.*—
Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Bac. (*splashing with his oar*).
I'll disperse you with a splash.

Frogs. Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.

Bac. I'll subdue
Your rebellious, noisy crew—
—Have amongst you there, slap-dash. [*Strikes at them.*

Frogs. Brekeke-kesh, koash, koash.
We defy your oar and you.

Char. Hold! We're ashore just—shift your oar. Get out.
—Now pay for your fare.

Bac. There—there it is—the twopence.

CHARON *returns.* BACCHUS, *finding himself alone and in a strange place, begins to call out.*

Bac. Hoh, Xanthias! Xanthias, I say! Where's Xanthias?

Xan. A-hoy!

Bac. Come here.

Xan. I'm glad to see you, master.

Bac. What's that before us there?

Xan. The mire and darkness.

Bac. Do you see the villains and the perjurers
That he told us of?

Xan. Yes, plain enough, don't you?

Bac. Ah! now I see them, indeed, quite plain—and now too.[1]
[*Turning to the audience.*
Well, what shall we do next?

[1] Similar compliments to the audience occur frequently in Aristophanes' plays.

Xan. We'd best move forward;
For here's the place that Hercules there inform'd us
Was haunted by those monsters.
Bac. Oh, confound him!
He vapour'd and talk'd at random to deter me
From venturing. He's amazingly conceited
And jealous of other people, is Hercules;
He reckon'd I should rival him, and, in fact
(Since I've come here so far), I should rather like
To meet with an adventure in some shape.
Xan. By Jove! and I think I hear a kind of a noise.
Bac. Where? where?
Xan. There, just behind us.
Bac. Go behind, then.
Xan. There!—it's before us now.—There!
Bac. Go before, then.
Xan. Ah! now I see it—a monstrous beast indeed!
Bac. What kind?
Xan. A dreadful kind—all kinds at once.
It changes and transforms itself about
To a mule and an ox,—and now to a beautiful creature;
A woman!
Bac. Where? where is she? Let me seize her.
Xan. But now she's turned to a mastiff all of a sudden.
Bac. It's the Weird hag! the Vampyre![1]
Xan. (*collectedly*). Like enough.
She's all of a blaze of fire about the mouth.
Bac. (*with great trepidation*).
Has she got the brazen foot?
Xan. (*with cool despair*). Yes, there it is—
By Jove!—and the cloven hoof to the other leg,
Distinct enough—that's she!
Bac. But what shall I do?
Xan. And I, too?

[*Bacchus runs to the front of the stage, where there was a seat of honour appropriated to the priest of Bacchus.*

Bac. Save me, Priest, protect and save me,
That we may drink and be jolly together hereafter.
Xan. We're ruin'd, Master Hercules.

[1] The Empusa, a fabulous hag, known only in the mythology of the Athenian nursery.

Bac. Don't call me so, I beg:
Don't mention my name, good friend, upon any account.[1]
Xan. Well, BACCHUS, then!
Bac. That's worse, ten thousand times.
[*Bacchus remains hiding his face before the seat of the priest—in the meantime affairs take a more favourable turn.*
Xan. (*cheerfully*). Come, master, move along—Come, come this way.
Bac. (*without looking round*).
What's happened?
Xan. Why we're prosperous and victorious:
The storm of fear and danger has subsided,
And (as the actor said the other day)
"Has only left a gentle *qualm* behind."
The Vampyre's vanish'd.
Bac. Has she? upon your oath?
Xan. By Jove! she has.
Bac. No, swear again.
Xan. By Jove!
Bac. Is she, by Jupiter?
Xan. By Jupiter!
Bac. Oh dear; what a fright I was in with the very sight of her:
It turn'd me sick and pale—but see, the priest here!
He has colour'd up quite with the same alarm.[2]
—What has brought me to this pass?—It must be Jupiter
With his "*Chamber in the Skies*," and the "*Foot of Time*."
[*A flute sounds. Bacchus remains absorbed and inattentive to the objects about him.*
Xan. Holloh, you!
Bac. What?
Xan. Why, did you not hear?
Bac. Why, what?
Xan. The sound of a flute.
Bac. (*recollecting himself*). Indeed! And there's a smell too;
A pretty mystical ceremonious smell
Of torches. We'll watch here, and keep quite quiet.

[1] The Scholiast gives us no explanation of the motive which induced Aristophanes to play this trick upon the priest.
[2] An ancient Scholiast has ascertained that this was a personal allusion, and that the priest of Bacchus at that time was eminent for a red face.

The proper Chorus, consisting of the votaries of Bacchus, now appears upon the stage; or more properly speaking, on the orchestra (a platform in front of the stage, but of inferior elevation); a circumstance which (as Schlegel has justly observed) has been wholly overlooked in all attempts to introduce a Chorus upon the modern stage, on which it is impossible for them to appear without embarrassing the actors and distracting the attention of the spectators. It is much to be regretted that the explanations which Mr. Schlegel has given of the local arrangement of the ancient stage (a subject on which he seems to have very clear ideas) have not been accompanied with graphic illustrations which would make them equally intelligible to his readers.

The following scene is a humorous representation of the concluding ceremony of the Eleusinian mysteries, on the last day of which the worship of Bacchus, under the invocation of Iacchus, was united with that of Ceres. Iacchus seems to have been the last Avatar of the worship of Bacchus, as Pan was the first. For an account of the character of this worship, and its extreme discrepancy from that of Ceres, with which it was united in this festival, see the learned and original work of Mr. Ouvaroff, which has been lately translated and illustrated by Mr. Christie. It is to be observed that though the votaries are celebrating the rights of Bacchus, Bacchus being disguised and incognito, or not considering himself concerned in the invocation of Iacchus, does not take any notice of them as his votaries or adherents.

CHORUS OF VOTARIES. BACCHUS. XANTHIAS.

CHORUS.—*Shouting and Singing.*

Iacchus! Iacchus! Ho!
Iacchus! Iacchus! Ho!

Xan. There, Master, there they are, the initiated;
All sporting about as he [1] told us we should find 'em.
They're singing in praise of Bacchus like Diagoras.[2]

Bac. Indeed, and so they are; but we'll keep quiet
Till we make them out a little more distinctly.

CHORUS.—*Song.*

Mighty Bacchus! Holy Power!
Hither at the wonted hour
Come away,
Come away,
With the wanton holiday,
Where the revel uproar leads
To the mystic holy meads,

[1] Hercules.

[2] Ironically. Diagoras, a dithyrambic poet, and consequently a composer of hymns in praise of Bacchus; banished from Athens, and proscribed on a charge of atheism.

Where the frolic votaries fly,
With a tipsy shout and cry;
Flourishing the Thyrsus high,
Flinging forth, alert and airy,
To the sacred old vagary,
The tumultuous dance and song,
Sacred from the vulgar throng;
Mystic orgies, that are known
To the votaries alone—
To the mystic chorus solely—
Secret—unreveal'd—and holy.

Xan. Oh glorious virgin, daughter of the goddess!
What a scent of roasted griskin reach'd my senses.

Bac. Keep quiet—and watch for a chance of a piece of the haslets.

CHORUS.—*Song.*

Raise the fiery torches high!
Bacchus is approaching nigh,
Like the planet of the morn,
Breaking with the hoary dawn,
On the dark solemnity—
There they flash upon the sight;
All the plain is blazing bright,
Flush'd and overflown with light:
Age has cast his years away,
And the cares of many a day,
Sporting to the lively lay—
Mighty Bacchus! march and lead
(Torch in hand toward the mead)
Thy devoted humble Chorus,
Mighty Bacchus—move before us!

SEMICHORUS

Keep silence—keep peace—and let all the profane
From our holy solemnity duly refrain;
Whose souls unenlightened by taste, are obscure;
Whose poetical notions are dark and impure;
Whose theatrical conscience
Is sullied by nonsense;

Who never were train'd by the mighty Cratinus [1]
In mystical orgies poetic and vinous;
Who delight in buffooning and jests out of season;
Who promote the designs of oppression and treason;
Who foster sedition, and strife, and debate;
All traitors, in short, to the stage and the state;
Who surrender a fort, or in private, export
To places and harbours of hostile resort,
Clandestine consignments of cables and pitch;
In the way that Thorycion [2] grew to be rich
From a scoundrelly dirty collector of tribute:
All such we reject and severely prohibit:
All statesmen retrenching the fees and the salaries
Of theatrical bards, in revenge for the railleries,
And jests, and lampoons, of this holy solemnity,
Profanely pursuing their personal enmity,
For having been flouted, and scoff'd, and scorn'd,
All such are admonish'd and heartily warn'd;
We warn them once,
We warn them twice,
We warn and admonish—we warn them thrice,
To conform to the law,
To retire and withdraw;
While the Chorus again with the formal saw
(Fixt and assign'd to the festive day)
Move to the measure and march away.

SEMICHORUS.

March! march! lead forth,
Lead forth manfully,
March in order all;
Bustling, hustling, justling,
As it may befall;
Flocking, shouting, laughing,
Mocking, flouting, quaffing,
One and all;
All have had a belly-full

[1] Cratinus, doubly a votary of Bacchus, as a dramatic poet and a hard drinker.

[2] Neither the scholiasts nor commentators give us any information respecting Thorycion, except that he had a command at Ægina.

Of breakfast brave and plentiful;
Therefore
Evermore
With your voices and your bodies
Serve the goddess,
And raise
Songs of praise;
She shall save the country still,
And save it against the traitor's will;
So she says.

SEMICHORUS.

Now let us raise, in a different strain,
The praise of the goddess [1] the giver of grain;
Imploring her favour
With other behaviour,
In measures more sober, submissive, and graver.

SEMICHORUS.

Ceres, holy patroness,
Condescend to mark and bless,
With benevolent regard,
Both the Chorus and the Bard;
Grant them for the present day
Many things to sing and say,
Follies intermix'd with sense;
Folly, but without offence.
Grant them with the present play
To bear the prize of verse away.

SEMICHORUS.

Now call again, and with a different measure,
The power of mirth and pleasure;
The florid, active Bacchus, bright and gay,
To journey forth and join us on the way.

[1] The author here marks the different character of the worship of Ceres, as compared with that of Bacchus.

SEMICHORUS.

O Bacchus, attend! the customary patron
Of every lively lay;
Go forth without delay
Thy wonted annual way,
To meet the ceremonious holy matron:[1]
Her grave procession gracing,
Thine airy footsteps tracing
With unlaborious, light, celestial motion;
And here at thy devotion
Behold thy faithful quire
In pitiful attire;
All overworn and ragged,
This jerkin old and jagged,
These buskins torn and burst,
Though sufferers in the fray,
May serve us at the worst
To sport throughout the day;
And there within the shades,
I spy some lovely maids;
With whom we romp'd and revell'd,
Dismantled and dishevell'd;
With their bosoms open,
With whom we might be coping.

Xan. Well, I was always hearty,
Disposed to mirth and ease,
I'm ready to join the party.

Bac. (*with a tone of imbecility, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek's "Yes, and I too"—"Ay or I either"*).
And I will, if you please.

[Some verses follow, which are sung by the Chorus, and in which some of the characters of the State are lampooned; they are not capable of translation, but are introduced appropriately, as the Bacchic and Eleusinian processions, which are here represented, were accompanied by a great licence of abuse and ribaldry.]

BACCHUS (*to the* CHORUS).

Prithee, my good fellows,
Would you please to tell us

[1] Ceres.

Which is Pluto's door,
I'm an utter stranger,
Never here before.

CHORUS.

Friend, you're out of danger,
You need not seek it far;
There it stands before ye,
Before ye, where you are.

Bac. Take up your bundles, Xanthias.
Xan. Hang all bundles;
A bundle has no end, and these have none.
[*Exeunt Bacchus and Xanthias.*

SEMICHORUS.

Now we go to dance and sing
In the consecrated shades;
Round the secret holy ring,
With the matrons and the maids.
Thither I must haste to bring
The mysterious early light;
Which must witness every rite
Of the joyous happy night.

SEMICHORUS.

Let us hasten—let us fly—
Where the lovely meadows lie;
Where the living waters flow;
Where the roses bloom and blow.
—Heirs of Immortality,
Segregated, safe and pure,
Easy, sorrowless, secure;
Since our earthly course is run,
We behold a brighter sun.
Holy lives—a holy vow—
Such rewards await them now.

Scene. The Gate of Pluto's Palace.

Enter BACCHUS *and* XANTHIAS.

Bac. (*going up to the door with considerable hesitation*).[1]
Well, how must I knock at the door now? Can't ye tell me?
How do the native inhabitants knock at doors?
Xan. Pah; don't stand fooling there; but smite it smartly,
With the very spirit and air of Hercules.
Bac. Holloh!
Æacus (*from within, with the voice of a royal and infernal porter*).
Who's there?
Bac. (*with a forced voice*). 'Tis I, the valiant Hercules!
Æacus.[2] (*coming out*).
Thou brutal, abominable, detestable,
Vile, villainous, infamous, nefarious scoundrel!
—How durst thou, villain as thou wert, to seize
Our watch-dog, Cerberus, whom I kept and tended
Hurrying him off, half-strangled in your grasp?
—But now, be sure we have you safe and fast,
Miscreant and villain!—Thee, the Stygian cliffs,
With stern adamantine durance, and the rocks
Of inaccessible Acheron, red with gore,
Environ and beleaguer; and the watch,
And swift pursuit of the hideous hounds of hell;
And the horrible Hydra, with her hundred heads,
Whose furious ravening fangs shall rend and tear thee;
Wrenching thy vitals forth, with the heart and midriff;
While inexpressible Tartesian monsters,
And grim Tithrasian Gorgons toss and scatter
With clattering claws, thine intertwined intestines.
To them, with instant summons, I repair,
Moving in hasty march with steps of speed.

[1] Compare this with Bacchus's behaviour at Hercules's door, where he knew he was quite safe.

[2] The Scholiast informs us, that the horrific part of Æacus's Speech is an imitation of an attempt at the sublime, in Euripides's tragedy of *Theseus*, which is now lost; but which probably related to his descent to the infernal regions. The whole of the speech in the original is worth examining; it seems intended as a sportive display of poetical execution; passing, by short imperceptible gradations, through the whole *Scale of Style*, from the anger of comedy, to the loftiest and most exaggerated style of tragedy, till it is blown up into bombast, and finishes in burlesque.

[*Æacus departs with a tremendous tragical exit, and Bacchus falls to the ground in a fright.*

Xan. Holloh, you! What's the matter there—?

Bac. Oh dear,
I've had an accident.

Xan. Poh! poh! jump up!
Come! you ridiculous simpleton! don't lie there,
The people will see you.

Bac. Indeed I'm sick at heart; lah!

(*Here a few lines are omitted.*)

Xan. Was there ever in heaven or earth such a coward?

Bac. Me?
A coward! Did not I show my presence of mind—
And call for a sponge and water in a moment?
Would a coward have done that?

Xan. What else would he do?

Bac. He'd have lain there stinking like a nasty coward;
But I jump'd up at once, like a lusty wrestler,[1]
And look'd about, and wiped myself, withal.

Xan. Most manfully done!

Bac. By Jove, and I think it was;
But tell me, wer'n't you frighten'd with that speech?
—Such horrible expressions!

Xan. (*coolly, but with conscious and intentional coolness*).
No, not I;
I took no notice—

Bac. Well, I'll tell you what,
Since you're such a valiant-spirited kind of fellow,
Do you be *Me*—with the club and the lion-skin,
Now you're in this courageous temper of mind;
And I'll go take my turn and carry the bundles.

Xan. Well—give us hold—I must humour you, forsooth;
Make haste (*he changes his dress*), and now behold the Xanthian Hercules,
And mind if I don't display more heart and spirit.

Bac.[2] Indeed, and you look the character, completely,

[1] But whene'er at wrestling matches they were worsted in the fray,
Wiped their shoulders from the dust, denied the fall and fought away.
—*Knights.*

[2] Bacchus, now his mind is at ease, begins to be humorous. Hercules had a temple at the village of Melite; but a sarcasm is implied against Callias, who was likewise of Melite, and used a lion-skin as his military dress.

Like that heroic Melitensian hangdog—
Come, now for my bundles. I must mind my bundles.

Enter PROSERPINE'S SERVANT MAID (*a kind of Dame Quickly*), *who immediately addresses* XANTHIAS.

Dear Hercules. Well, you're come at last. Come in,
For the goddess, as soon as she heard of it, set to work
Baking peck loaves and frying stacks of pancakes,
And making messes of furmety; there's an ox
Besides, she has roasted whole, with a relishing stuffing,
If you'll only just step in this way.
Xan. (*with dignity and reserve*). I thank you,
I'm equally obliged.
Ser. Maid. No, no, by Jupiter!
We must not let you off, indeed. There's wild fowl
And sweetmeats for the dessert, and the best of wine;
Only walk in.
Xan. (*as before*). I thank you. You'll excuse me.
Ser. Maid. No, no, we can't excuse you, indeed we can't;
There are dancing and singing girls besides.
Xan. (*with dissembled emotion*). What! dancers?
Ser. Maid. Yes, that there are; the sweetest, charmingest things
That you ever saw—and there's the cook this moment
Is dishing up the dinner.
Xan. (*with an air of lofty condescension*). Go before then,
And tell the girls—those singing girls you mentioned—
To prepare for my approach in person presently.
(*To Bacchus.*) You, sirrah! follow behind me with the bundles.
Bac. Holloh, you! what, do you take the thing in earnest,
Because, for a joke, I drest you up like Hercules?
[*Xanthias continues to gesticulate as Hercules.*
Come, don't stand fooling, Xanthias. You'll provoke me.
There, carry the bundles, Sirrah, when I bid you.
Xan. (*relapsing at once into his natural air*).
Why, sure? do you mean to take the things away
That you gave me yourself of your own accord this instant?
Bac. I never mean a thing; I do it at once.
Let go of the lion's skin directly, I tell you.
Xan. (*resigning his heroical insignia with a tragical air and tone*).

To you, just Gods, I make my last appeal,
Bear witness!

Bac. What! the Gods?—do you think they mind you?
How could you take it in your head, I wonder;
Such a foolish fancy for a fellow like you,
A mortal and a slave, to pass for Hercules?

Xan. There. Take them.—There—you may have them—but,
please God,
You may come to want my help some time or other.

CHORUS.

Dexterous and wily wits,
Find their own advantage ever;
For the wind where'er it sits,
Leaves a berth secure and clever
To the ready navigator;
That foresees and knows the nature,
Of the wind and weather's drift;
And betimes can turn and shift
To the sheltered easy side;
'Tis a practice proved and tried,
Not to wear a formal face;
Fixt in attitude and place,
Like an image on its base;
'Tis the custom of the seas,
Which, as all the world agrees,
Justifies Theramenes.[1]

BACCHUS.

How ridiculous and strange;
What a monstrous proposition,
That I should condescend to change
My dress, my name, and my condition,
To follow Xanthias, and behave
Like a mortal and a slave;
To be set to watch the door

[1] The political versatility of Theramenes is noticed in a subsequent passage in the altercation between Æschylus and Euripides. The naval allusion may be supposed to refer to his conduct towards his colleagues in command, after the battle of Arginusæ.

While he wallow'd with his whore,
Tumbling on a purple bed;
While I waited with submission,
To receive a broken head;
Or be kick'd upon suspicion
Of impertinence and peeping
At the joys that he was reaping.

As Bacchus was before made answerable for the offence which Hercules had committed in seizing Cerberus, he is now accused of other misdemeanours which Hercules (agreeably to the character of voracity and violence which was attributed to him by the comic writers) might be supposed to have committed in the course of the same expedition.

Enter Two WOMEN, *Sutlers or Keepers of an Eating House.*

1st Woman. What, Platana! Goody Platana! there! that's he,
The fellow that robs and cheats poor victuallers;
That came to our house and eat those nineteen loaves.
2nd Woman. Ay, sure enough that's he, the very man.
Xan. (*tauntingly to Bacchus*). There's mischief in the wind for somebody!
1st Woman. —And a dozen and a half of cutlets and fried chops,
At a penny halfpenny a piece—
Xan. (*significantly*). There are pains and penalties
Impending—
1st Woman. —And all the garlic: such a quantity
As he swallowed—
Bac. (*delivers this speech with Herculean dignity, after his fashion; having hitherto remained silent upon the same principle*).
Woman, you're beside yourself;
You talk you know not what—
2nd Woman. No, no! you reckoned
I should not know you again with them there buskins.[1]
1st Woman. —Good lack! and there was all that fish besides.
Indeed—with the pickle, and all—and the good green cheese
That he gorged at once, with the rind, and the rush-baskets;
And then, when I called for payment, he looked fierce,
And stared at me in the face, and grinned, and roared—
Xan. Just like him! That's the way wherever he goes.

[1] Buskins were peculiar to Bacchus: the woman mistaking him for Hercules, considers them as an attempt at disguise.

1st Woman. —And snatched his sword [1] out, and behaved like mad.

Xan. Poor souls! you suffered sadly! [2]

1st Woman. Yes, indeed;
And then we both ran off with the fright and terror,
And scrambled into the loft beneath the roof;
And he took up two rugs and stole them off.

Xan. Just like him again—but something must be done.
Go call me Cleon,[3] he's my advocate.

2nd Woman. And Hyperbolus,[3] if you meet him send him here.
He's mine; and we'll demolish him, I warrant.

1st Woman (*going close up to Bacchus in the true termagant attitude of rage and defiance, with the arms akimbo, and a neck and chin thrust out*).
How I should like to strike those ugly teeth out
With a good big stone, you ravenous greedy villain!
You gormandising villain! that I should—
Yes, that I should; your wicked ugly fangs
That have eaten up my substance, and devoured me.

Bac. And I could toss you into the public pit
With the malefactors' carcasses; that I could,
With pleasure and satisfaction; that I could.

1st Woman. And I should like to rip that gullet out
With a reaping hook that swallowed all my tripe,
And liver and lights—but I'll fetch Cleon here,
And he shall summon him. He shall settle him,
And have it out of him this very day.

[*Exeunt 1st and 2nd Woman.*

Bac. (*in a pretended soliloquy*).
I love poor Xanthias dearly, that I do;
I wish I might be hanged else.

Xan. Yes, I know—
I know your meaning—No; no more of that,
I won't act Hercules—

Bac. Now pray don't say so,
My little Xanthias.

Xan. How should I be Hercules?

[1] In allusion to Euripides's description of Hercules. Schol.
[2] X. inflames the women's wrath by judicious commiseration.
[3] Turbulent orators and public accusers (often mentioned by Aristophanes) lately dead.

A mortal and a slave, a fellow like me?—[1]

Bac. I know you're angry, and you've a right to be angry;
And if you beat me for it I'd not complain;
But if ever I strip you again, from this time forward,
I wish I may be utterly confounded,
With my wife, my children, and my family,
And the blear-eyed Archedemus [2] into the bargain.

Xan. I agree then, on that oath, and those conditions.

[*Xanthias equips himself with the club and lion's skin, and Bacchus resumes his bundles.*

CHORUS (*addressing* XANTHIAS).

Now that you revive and flourish
In your old attire again,
You must rouse afresh and nourish
Thoughts of an heroic strain;
That exalt and raise the figure,
And assume a fire and vigour;
And an attitude and air
Suited to the garb you wear;
With a brow severely bent,
Like the god you represent.
But beware,
Have a care!
If you blunder, or betray
Any weakness any way;
Weakness of the heart or brain,
We shall see you once again
Trudging in the former track,
With the bundles at your back.

XANTHIAS (*in reply to the* CHORUS).

Friends, I thank you for your care;
Your advice was good and fair;
Corresponding in its tone
With reflections of my own.

[1] Alludes to what Bacchus had said.

[2] Seems to have been a meddling foreigner; his want of claim to the character of citizen is noticed by Aristophanes and in a fragment of Eupolis.

—Though I clearly comprehend
All the upshot and the end
(That if any good comes of it,
Any pleasure any profit—
He, my master, will recede
From the terms that were agreed),
You shall see me, notwithstanding,
Stern, intrepid, and commanding.
Now's the time; For there's a noise!
Now for figure, look, and voice!

Æacus enters again as a vulgar executioner of the law, with suitable understrappers in attendance.

Æacus is exhibited, in the following scene, as the ideal character of a perfect and accomplished bailiff and thieftaker, and is marked by traits which prove that the genus has remained unchanged in the 2000 years between the times of Aristophanes and Fielding. The true hardness of mind is most strikingly apparent in those passages where he means to be civil and accommodating. Thus Foote has characterised his Miser by traits of miserly liberality. The unfeeling master is personated by a slave (as the unfeeling courtier is by Autolycus in the *Winter's Tale*); the scene is thus removed one degree further from reality, otherwise like the Tartuffe it would excite too strong a feeling of indignation, and outstep the true limits of Comedy.

Æacus. Arrest me there that fellow that stole the dog.
There!—Pinion him!—Quick!
Bac. (*tauntingly to Xanthias*). There's somebody in a scrape.
Xan. (*in a menacing attitude*). Keep off, and be hanged.
Æacus. Oh, hoh! do you mean to fight for it?
Here! Pardokas,[1] and Skeblias, and the rest of ye,
Make up to the rogue, and settle him. Come, be quick.
[*A scuffle ensues, in which Xanthias succeeds in obliging Æacus's runners to keep their distance.*
Bac. (*mortified at Xanthias's prowess*).
Well, is not this quite monstrous and outrageous,
To steal the dog, and then to make an assault
In justification of it.
Xan. (*triumphantly and ironically*). Quite outrageous!
Æacus (*gravely, and dissembling his mortification*).
An aggravated case!

[1] The persons employed in the forcible and personal execution of the law, as arrests, etc., etc., in Athens, were foreign slaves, Scythians purchased for that purpose by the state. These barbarous names are supposed to indicate persons of this description.

Xan. (*with candour and gallantry*). Well, now—by Jupiter,
May I die; but I never saw this place before—
Nor ever stole the amount of a farthing from you:
Nor a hair of your dog's tail—But you shall see now,
I'll settle all this business nobly and fairly.
—This slave of mine—you may take and torture him;
And if you make out anything against me,
You may take and put me to death for aught I care.

Æacus (*in an obliging tone, softened into deference and civility by the liberality of Xanthias's proposal*).
But which way would you please to have him tortured?

Xan. (*with a gentlemanly spirit of accommodation*).[1]
In your own way—with . . . the lash—with . . . knots and screws,
With . . . the common usual customary tortures.
With the rack—with . . . the water-torture—anyway—
With fire and vinegar—all sorts of ways.
(*After a very slight pause.*) There's only one thing I should warn you of:
I must not have him treated like a child,
To be whipt with fennel, or with lettuce leaves.

Æacus. That's fair—and if so be . . . he's maim'd or crippled
In any respect—the valy[2] shall be paid you.

Xan. Oh no!—by no means! not to me!—by no means!
You must not mention it!—Take him to the torture.

Æacus. It had better be here, and under your own eye.[3]
(*To Bacchus.*) Come you—put down your bundles and make ready.
And mind—Let me hear no lies!

Bac. I'll tell you what:
I'd advise people not to torture me;
I give you notice—I'm a deity.
So mind now—you'll have nobody to blame
But your own self—

Æacus. What's that you're saying there?

[1] Xanthias is too much of a gentlemen to enter into details; he wishes to do what is creditable, and handsome, and suitable to his rank and character.

[2] *Value*, the vulgar pronunciation is given.

[3] Æacus is represented as overpowered and won over by the profuse generosity with which Xanthias disposes of the joints and muscles of his slave.

Bac. Why that I'm Bacchus, Jupiter's own son:
That fellow there's a slave. [*Pointing to Xanthias.*
Æacus (*to Xanthias*). Do ye hear?
Xan. I hear him—
A reason the more to give him a good beating;
If he's immortal he need never mind it.
Bac. Why should not you be beat as well as I then,
If you're immortal, as you say you are?
Xan. Agreed—and him, the first that you see flinching,
Or seeming to mind it at all, you may set him down
For an impostor and no real deity.
Æacus (*to Xanthias with warmth and cordiality*).
Ah, you're a worthy gentleman I'll be bound for't;
You're all for the truth and the proof. Come—Strip there both o' ye.
Xan. But how can ye put us to the question fairly,
Upon equal terms?
Æacus (*in the tone of a person proposing a convenient, agreeable arrangement*). Oh, easily enough,
Conveniently enough—a lash a piece,
Each in your turn; you can have 'em one by one.
Xan. That's right. (*Putting himself in an attitude to receive the blow.*) Now mind if ye see me flinch or swerve.
Æacus (*strikes him, but without producing any expression of pain*).
I've struck.
Xan. Not you!
Æacus. Why it seems as if I had not.
I'll smite this other fellow. [*Strikes Bacchus.*
Bac. (*pretending not to feel*). When will you do it?

Æacus perseveres and applies his discipline alternately to Bacchus and Xanthias, and extorts from them various involuntary exclamations of pain, which they immediately account for, and justify in some ridiculous way. The passage cannot be translated literally, but an idea may be given of it. Suppose Bacchus to receive a blow, he exclaims—

Oh dear! (*and immediately subjoins*) Companions of my youthful years.
Xan. (*to Æacus*). Did ye hear? he made an outcry.
Æacus. What was that?
Bac. A favourite passage from Archilochus.
(*Xanthias receives a blow, and exclaims*)

O Jupiter! (*and subjoins*) that on the Idean height;
(*and contends that he has been repeating the first line of a well-known hymn. Æacus at length gives the matter up*).
Well, after all my pains, I'm quite at a loss
To discover which is the true, real deity.
By the Holy Goddess—I'm completely puzzled;
I must take you before Proserpine and Pluto,
Being gods themselves they're likeliest to know.
Bac. Why, that's a lucky thought. I only wish
It had happen'd to occur before you beat us.

The changes of character between Bacchus and Xanthias in the preceding scenes have obviously no reference to the improvement or decline of the dramatic art, which is the main, ostensible object of the comedy; but if we look to the critical and dangerous situation of the state, at the period when it was produced (viz. the third year of the 93rd Olympiad) and attend to the unusually vehement and earnest political remonstrances in the address of the Chorus to the audience which follows, we shall see abundant reason to conclude that some part of the action of the stage must have been intended to be understood in a political sense.

The measure, which at that time was uppermost in the minds of everybody, but which nobody would venture openly to propose, was the recall of Alcibiades from his second banishment; a subject which is brought forward in the last scene but one, and upon which Æschylus and Euripides are made to deliver their opinions, the intention of the author being evidently in favour of Alcibiades, as he makes the favourable opinion proceed from the worthier and more manly character. It should appear that, in the preceding scenes in the infernal regions, Xanthias is the representative of Alcibiades, and Bacchus of the Athenian people, and that the changes of character represent the changes in their political relation to each other. The scene in which they are made to contend as to their ability to bear a beating without crying out, is merely a proverb dramatised and put into action like those of the French, who have made a part of the amusement to consist in guessing the proverb. The solution of the enigma in this case would be πότεροι κλαυσούμεθα μεῖζον, which was applied to people who, to their mutual injury, persevered in refusing to be reconciled. Such was, at the time this play was produced, the relative situation of Alcibiades and of the Athenian people; he was living in exile upon his own estate in Thrace, while they were struggling with difficulties from which his genius and abilities might have relieved them; the blows of fortune fell equally upon them both, and the question as to which was the greater sufferer might be deemed as difficult of decision as it appeared to Æacus, who, after all the discipline impartially inflicted on the contending parties, was obliged to leave it undetermined.

The original and admirable speculation of Mr. Whiter upon the doctrine of the association of ideas considered as an instrument of criticism, is applicable to much higher purposes, but since it falls in our way, we may venture to employ it here. The recall of Alcibiades was considered as a measure which must place him at once at the head of the government, and be accompanied with a considerable retrenchment of the powers of the Democracy; on the other hand, it was expected

by those who were favourable to the measure, that, under his conduct and management, the affairs of the Republic might be retrieved, and its ancient ascendancy reasserted—that the result would be success abroad and a government at home partly democratic and partly dictatorial. Now, if we were right in conjecturing that the proverb above mentioned was alluded to in the foregoing scene, we shall see that it was connected in Aristophanes' mind with those very ideas of subsequent reconciliation, joint command, and external ascendancy:

διακαυνιάσαι πότεροι κλαυσούμεθα μεῖζον,
Ἐξὸν σπεισαμένοις κοινῇ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄρχειν.

I do not know whether it is worth while to mention some coincidences which may be casual. The *pole* with which Xanthias appears, and which seems to be the emblem of his situation, and which Bacchus calls *ἀνάφορον*, had another name, as we learn from the argument (viz. *ἀλλακτὸν*), which would make it a proper emblem of the representative of Alcibiades. Xanthias is, in the first instance, degraded in consequence of being invited to a banquet by Proserpine. Alcibiades' first exile was connected with a charge against him of having profaned the mysteries of Ceres and Proserpine at a *banquet*. The ludicrous song in which Bacchus justifies himself for having degraded Xanthias is a fair burlesque representation of the mixture of envy and indignation which the undisguised ascendancy and the insolent debauches of Alcibiades had excited in the minds of the Athenian people, and which contributed powerfully to produce his first banishment. The continuator of Brumoy seems to have been aware of the propriety of looking for some political interpretation of these scenes; he supposes Xanthias to be a personification of the newly enfranchised slaves; but Aristophanes, as we see from the address of the chorus, approved of the measure, and certainly could not mean to hold out to the new citizens the possibility of their being again reduced to servitude. As Aristophanes' humour frequently carries double, this explanation might perhaps hold good as far as Xanthias' first investiture with the lion's skin, but it wholly inapplicable to the subsequent changes.

The passages which follow may be considered as a relic and sample of the primitive satyric comedy, which, as it is well known, consisted solely of songs and recitations, unaccompanied by dramatic action or dialogue. We may venture to imagine that a gradual change, in the form and conduct of comedy, might have taken place, nearly in this manner.

Let it be supposed that, in process of time, some species of exhibition, in dumb show, was introduced to illustrate and relieve the continued series of singing and recitation which constituted the primitive satyric comedy—we may conceive, that these pantomimic actors would by degrees be emancipated from the obligation of silence: and we shall then see that, upon the ground of this emancipation, the Aristophanic or *ancient* comedy (as we may be allowed to call it, in contradistinction to the *primitive*) might have been originally founded.

When once the pantomimic actors had, by dint of gradual and permitted encroachment, established themselves in the undisputed privilege of *speech*, the ancient or Aristophanic comedy would in fact have received its existence, not as a declared innovation, but as an allowable improvement of the lawful primitive comedy such as it had existed in the preceding period, during which the satyric recital had been illustrated by interludes in dumb show. But as the change, though in

fact a most essential one, was neither acknowledged nor avowed, it would not (in the first instance at least) occasion any alteration of the established forms of the primitive comedy, or the omission of any of the various kinds of recited compositions, which had formed the sum total of the original entertainment. It would seem even reasonable, *à priori*, to conclude that they would be retained and accommodated to the action, and to the dialogue, then for the first time introduced. And that they were so retained, more strictly perhaps in the first instance (and in the earliest attempts of each successive poet of the ancient comedy, before an established reputation enabled him to depart from the strict observation of theatric etiquette), and, in process of time, less punctually, and with a greater degree of latitude, both by individuals, and by the whole school of ancient comedy, will, I think, appear probable to those whose recollection will furnish them with immediate instances from the comedies of Aristophanes, or who with these and some further suggestions presented to them may think it worth while to examine them. The epirrema and antepirrema being, in almost every instance, totally unconnected with the action of the play, being addressed moreover to the audience, by the chorus remaining alone in possession of the stage during a suspension of the dramatic action, and frequently (as in the instance immediately following) conveying important political suggestions, or strong reflections upon the vices and abuses of the times, may, perhaps, upon a consideration of all these circumstances, be recognised without scruple as a remnant of the recited satyric effusions of the primitive comedy. It is observable that the epirrema and antepirrema are occasionally repeated more than once in the same play, a circumstance which ought not to be overlooked in any attempt which may be made to form an idea of the primitive satyric comedy, by reconstructing it from the vestiges which are discoverable in the Aristophanic comedy. The parabasis, which was likewise recited by the chorus alone and unaccompanied by the dramatic performers, will naturally be referred to the same origin. It seems to have been frequently omitted in Aristophanic comedy, and is generally introduced with some apology on the part of the chorus for obtruding themselves on the attention of the audience, and for detaining them with (the common topic of a parabasis) an encomium or vindication of the author. In the present play it is omitted, unless the semichorus, p. 20, " Keep silence," etc., should be considered a very diminutive and imperfect specimen. We have then the parabasis, together with the epirrema and antepirrema, the two last (as was before observed) repeated more than once; and these (as we have seen) were recited by the chorus remaining in exclusive possession of the stage; these, therefore, as far as they go, may serve to give us an idea of the primitive comedy; but in order to furnish an entertainment of any tolerable length, it will be necessary to detect other portions of it which, having been accommodated to, and incorporated with, the dramatic action, appear at present in a form which renders it less easy to recognise and reclaim them. Among these I should venture to place the ῥῆσις μακρὰ or long satyric narrative in iambics; considering that narrative either real or fictitious is the most obvious of all the forms of satyric composition, I cannot but imagine that it must have existed even in the most early forms of satyric comedy, though not always retained in the plays of Aristophanes; it seems, whenever it was admitted, to have been considered as a regular feature of the play, and a subject for separate criticism or commendation. In the two earliest

plays of Aristophanes (in which he may be supposed to have adhered most scrupulously to the established formalities of the theatre) the ῥῆσις, or narrative, occupies a very distinguished place, and is addressed to the chorus by a single actor who is (be it observed) *alone* in possession of the stage. All these circumstances, together with the existence of the long ῥῆσις, or narrative, in the tragic dramas, as a piece of composition much laboured and attended to, seem to point to the same conclusion, and to indicate that the origin of these compositions is derived from the earliest institutions of tragedy and comedy, and from the primitive form of each of them anterior to the introduction of dramatic dialogue: I say *dramatic* dialogue, for a form of dialogue not properly dramatic seems to have existed in the primitive comedy, and to have maintained its place in the ancient or Aristophanic comedy, in which it is still discernible.[1] The two long argumentative dialogues, the one in tetrameter iambics, in which the advantage is given to the meaner character and the baser opinion, and the other in anapæsts, in which the superior character is represented as asserting a higher principle, these two dialogues occurring in almost all the plays of Aristophanes, are indeed usually connected with the dramatic action, but they do not tend in any degree to advance it; not at least in any degree proportionate to the space which they occupy, or to the attention which appears to have been bestowed upon them—they serve merely to exhibit a sharp encounter of wits upon a given controversial topic; and, if detached from the play, might be fairly considered a mere satyric dialogue. If, therefore, we separate from the Aristophanic comedy the two forms of satyric dialogue above mentioned, together with the ῥῆσις μακρὰ (or long satyric narrative), the parabasis (or address of the chorus to the audience on behalf of the author), and finally the epirrema and antepirrema (repeated, as was before observed, sometimes more than once in the course of the same piece), and if we add to these a number of satyrical songs and lampoons, we shall be able to form to ourselves an idea, not wholly inadequate, of the form and nature of the primitive satyric comedy, unaccompanied by dramatic action; if, again, we suppose (as was before suggested) that this series of songs and recitations and satyric dialogue and narrative was relieved at intervals by a pantomimic representation in dumb show, we shall have arrived upon the very confines of the Aristophanic comedy, where, in order to pass the boundary, nothing would be wanting but to remove the barrier which restrained the pantomimic actor from the privilege of speech.

It may be worth while to point out a singular coincidence arising out of the suppositions before mentioned. The number of the actors by which each comedy was performed was by law and custom limited to three; this law or custom might have been occasionally transgressed, but the regulation which excluded a fourth actor was generally adhered to as conformable to authority and precedent, which, in matters of religious institution (for such these comedies were considered, being a portion of the ceremonies connected with the Bacchic worship), were not to be rashly or unnecessarily violated.

[1] See, for instance, the two dialogues between Æschylus and Euripides, which follow, pp. 48 and 51.

In the present instance it is not unhappily connected with the action of the play—but it is in fact a mere controversy as to the comparative merits of the earlier and later school of tragic poetry.

Now, if we suppose this precedent to have originated from the practice of the primitive comedy, and assume at the same time the suppositions respecting its form and substance, which have been before stated, we shall see that, in addition to the chorus, it admitted of *three* actors who were entitled to the privilege of speech—namely, the reciter of the long ῥῆσις, or satyric narrative, and the two disputants in the controversial dialogues. As it would be difficult to account for this restriction from the general principles of dramatic art, we must, I apprehend, be content to attribute it to a precedent derived from the most ancient practice of the primitive comedy. It seems that the excessive number of actors had grown into what was considered to be an abuse; but when abuses are to be reformed, the regulations which restrain them are generally established upon the authority of the earliest examples, which, as we have seen, would not have admitted of more than three actors in addition to the chorus.

We have, therefore, as remnants of the primitive satyric comedy, independent of dramatic or pantomimic action—

The parabasis,
The satyric songs and lampoons,
The epirrema and antepirrema,
The long narrative,
The dialogue in tetrameter iambics,
Another, on the same subject, in anapæsts,
The epirrema and antepirrema repeated,
Finally, a conclusion, probably not much unlike that of the *Acharnians* or the *Peace*, the tone of which seems borrowed from a more primitive, jovial, rustic style.

After the introduction of pantomime, a second narrative seems to have been introduced, explanatory and prefatory to the action which was to follow. This, too, appears to have preserved its place in the Aristophanic comedy, and is to be found in most of the plays, as *Knights*, l. 40, *Wasps*, l. 85, *Peace*, l. 50 (ed. Bekk.), in all of which (it is to be observed) it is addressed by the speaker directly to the audience.

The vehemence of the remonstrance conveyed in the following composition has been already noticed, p. 35. For the state of things which gave rise to it, the reader must again be referred to a description of the critical and disgraceful condition of Athens at that period (the third year of the 93rd Olympiad). Mr. Mitford has described it with his usual force and accuracy.

It is observable that, in most of the plays of Aristophanes, there appears a sort of falling off in the antepirrema, as if the poet were, or affected to be, apprehensive of having ventured too far in the preceding epirrema. In this instance, the same warmth and energy is sustained throughout, but still with a slight distinction of character between the two. In the epirrema, the chorus begin gravely and authoritatively. In the antepirrema they resume the same subject, with a fanciful comparison.

The epirrema and antepirrema are (here, as elsewhere) preceded by a short personal lampoon, which has no obvious connection with the action of the drama: a circumstance which, in addition to others already indicated, serves to mark the connection between the primitive and the Aristophanic comedy.

CHORUS.

Muse, attend our solemn summons
And survey the assembled commons,
Congregated as they sit,
An enormous mass of wit,
—Full of genius, taste, and fire,
Jealous pride, and critic ire—
Cleophon [1] among the rest
(Like the swallow from her nest,
A familiar foreign bird),
Chatters loud and will be heard,
(With the accent and the grace
Which he brought with him from Thrace);
But we fear the tuneful strain
Will be turn'd to grief and pain;
He must sing a dirge perforce
When his trial takes its course;
We shall hear him moan and wail,
Like the plaintive nightingale.

EPIRREMA.[2]

It behoves the sacred Chorus, and of right to them belongs,
To suggest the best advice in their addresses and their songs,
In performance of our office, we present with all humility
A proposal for removing groundless fears and disability.
First that all that were inveigled into Phrynichus's [3] treason,
Should be suffer'd and received by rules of evidence and reason
To clear their conduct—Secondly, that none of our Athenian race
Should live suspected and subjected to loss of franchise and disgrace,
Feeling it a grievous scandal when a single naval fight
Renders foreigners and slaves partakers of the city's right: [4]

[1] Cleophon, one of the chief demagogues in the then ruined and degraded democracy. His mother was a Thracian, and Plato (the comic writer) had introduced her speaking in a broken jargon. He was put to death in a popular tumult.
[2] Metre long trochaics, "As near Porto Bello."
[3] Phrynichus. See Mitford, ch. 19, sect. 5 and 7.
[4] See p. 12, note.

—Not that we condemn the measure; we conceived it wisely done,
As a just and timely measure, and the first and only one:
—But your kinsmen and your comrades, those with whom you fought and bore
Danger, hardship, and fatigue, or with their fathers long before,
Struggling on the land and ocean, labouring with the spear and oar
—These we think, as they profess repentance for their past behaviour,
Might, by your exalted wisdoms, be received to grace and favour.
Better it would be, believe us, casting off revenge and pride,
To receive as friends and kinsmen all that combat on our side
Into full and equal franchise: on the other hand we fear,
If your hearts are fill'd with fancies, haughty, captious, and severe;
While the shock of instant danger threatens shipwreck to the state,
Such resolves will be lamented and repented of too late.

If the Muse foresees at all
What in future will befall
Dirty Cleigenes the small—
He, the sovereign of the bath,
Will not long escape from scath;
But must perish by and by,
With his potash and his lye;
With his realm and dynasty,
His terraqueous scouring ball,
And his washes, one and all;
Therefore he can never cease
To declaim against a peace.[1]

ANTEPIRREMA.

Often times have we reflected on a similar abuse,
In the choice of men for office, and of coins for common use;

[1] Parody from a tragic chorus predicting the downfall of some reigning family. Cleigenes, one of the obscure demagogues of the time, not mentioned by the Scholiast.

For your old and standard pieces, valued, and approved, and tried,
Here among the Grecian nations, and in all the world beside;
Recognised in every realm for trusty stamp and pure assay,
Are rejected and abandon'd for the trash of yesterday;
For a vile, adulterate issue, drossy, counterfeit, and base,
Which the traffic of the city passes current in their place![1]
And the men that stood for office, noted for acknowledged worth,
And for manly deeds of honour, and for honourable birth;
Train'd in exercise and art, in sacred dances and in song,
All are ousted and supplanted by a base ignoble throng;
Paltry stamp and vulgar mettle raise them to command and place,
Brazen counterfeit pretenders, scoundrels of a scoundrel race;
Whom the state in former ages scarce would have allow'd to stand,
At the sacrifice of outcasts, as the scape-goats of the land.[2]
—Time it is—and long has been, renouncing all your follies past,
To recur to sterling merit and intrinsic worth at last.
—If we rise, we rise with honour; if we fall, it must be so!
—But there was an ancient saying, which we all have heard and know,
That the wise, in dangerous cases, have esteem'd it safe and good
To receive a slight chastisement from *a wand of noble wood*.[3]

Scene. XANTHIAS *and* ÆACUS.

When two persons, perfectly strangers, are thrown together in a situation which makes it advisable for them to commence an immediate intimacy, they commonly begin by discovering a marvellous coincidence of taste and judgment upon all current topics. This obser-

[1] In the exhaustion of their resources, the Athenians had recourse to a debased currency—of course the good coin disappeared.
[2] The human scape-goat, the last unbloody remnant of human sacrifice.
[3] The original proverb says, "It is best to be hanged on a good tree." The English proverb says:—

"A bludgeon stands for death and blood,
But a wand of worthy wood
Chastises children for their good."

The measure suggested is the recall of Alcibiades, whose ascendancy would be less disgraceful than that of its existing ruler.

vation, which is not wholly superfluous here, appears to have been so far trite and hackneyed in the time of Aristophanes as to allow of its being exemplified in a piece of very brief burlesque. Xanthias and Æacus are the strangers; they discover immediately a uniformity of feeling and sentiment upon the topics most familiar to them as slaves, and conclude by a sudden pledge of friendship. It is to be observed that, in the dialogue which follows, Æacus never departs from the high ground of superiority in point of local *information*. All his answers have a slight tinge of irony, as if he was saying, "*Yes—much you know about it!*"

Æacus. By Jupiter; but he's a gentleman,
That master of yours.
Xan. A gentleman! To be sure he is;
Why, he does nothing else but wench and drink.
Æacus. His never striking you when you took his name—
Outfacing him and contradicting him!—
Xan. It might have been worse for him if he had.
Æacus. Well, that's well spoken, like a true-bred slave.
It's just the sort of language I delight in.
Xan. You love excuses?
Æacus. Yes; but I prefer
Cursing my master quietly in private.
Xan. Mischief you're fond of?
Æacus. Very fond indeed.
Xan. What think ye of muttering as you leave the room
After a beating?
Æacus. Why, that's pleasant too.
Xan. By Jove, is it! But listening at the door
To hear their secrets?
Æacus. Oh, there's nothing like it.
Xan. And then the reporting them in the neighbourhood.
Æacus. That's beyond everything.—That's quite ecstatic.
Xan. Well, give me your hand. And, there, take mine—and buss me.
And there again—and now for Jupiter's sake!—
(For he's the patron of our cuffs and beatings)
Do tell me what's that noise of people quarrelling
And abusing one another there within?
Æacus. Æschylus and Euripides, only![1]
Xan. Heh?—?—?
Æacus Why, there's a desperate business has broke out
Among these here dead people;—quite a tumult.

[1] As if he said, "It's what we're used to—you're a new-comer."

Xan. As how?
Æacus. First, there's a custom we have establish'd
In favour of professors of the arts.
When any one, the first in his own line,
Comes down amongst us here, he stands entitled
To privilege and precedence, with a seat [1]
At Pluto's royal board.
Xan. I understand you.
Æacus. So he maintains it, till there comes a better
Of the same sort, and then resigns it up.
Xan. But why should Æschylus be disturb'd at this?
Æacus. He held the seat for tragedy, as the master
In that profession.
Xan. Well, and who's there now?
Æacus. He kept it till Euripides appeared;
But he collected audiences about him,
And flourish'd, and exhibited, and harangued
Before the thieves, and housebreakers, and rogues,
Cut-purses, cheats, and vagabonds, and villains,
That make the mass of population here; [2]
[*Pointing to the audience.*
And they—being quite transported, and delighted
With his equivocations and evasions,
His subtleties and niceties and quibbles—
In short—they raised an uproar, and declared him
Archpoet, by a general acclamation.
And he with this grew proud and confident,
And laid a claim to the seat where Æschylus sat.
Xan. And did not he get pelted for his pains?
Æacus (*with the dry concise importance of superior local information*).
Why, no—The mob call'd out, and it was carried,
To have a public trial of skill between them.
Xan. You mean the mob of scoundrels that you mention'd?
Æacus. Scoundrels indeed! Ay, scoundrels without number.
Xan. But Æschylus must have had good friends and hearty?
Æacus. Yes; but good men are scarce both here and elsewhere.
Xan. Well, what has Pluto settled to be done?

[1] A seat at the public table in the Prytaneum was the reward of superior merit and services in Athens.
[2] For a similar compliment to the audience see p. 16.

Æacus. To have an examination and a trial
In public.
Xan. But how comes it?—Sophocles?—[1]
Why does he not put forth his claim amongst them?
Æacus. No, no!—He's not the kind of man—not he!
I tell ye; the first moment that he came,
He went up to Æschylus and saluted him
And kiss'd his cheek and took his hand quite kindly;
And Æschylus edged a little from his seat
To give him room; so now the story goes,
(At least I had it from Cleidemides;) [2]
He means to attend there as a stander-by,
Proposing to take up the conqueror;
If Æschylus gets the better, well and good,
He gives up his pretensions—but if not,
He'll stand a trial, he says, against Euripides.
Xan. There'll be strange doings.
Æacus. That there will—and shortly
—Here—in this place—strange things, I promise you;
A kind of thing that no man could have thought of;
Why, you'll see poetry weigh'd out and measured.
Xan. What, will they bring their tragedies to the steel-yards? [3]
Æacus. Yes, will they—with their rules and compasses
They'll measure, and examine, and compare,
And bring their plummets, and their lines and levels,
To take the bearings—for Euripides
Says that he'll make a survey, word by word.
Xan. Æschylus takes the thing to heart, I doubt.
Æacus. He bent his brows and pored upon the ground; I saw him.
Xan. Well, but who decides the business?
Æacus. Why, there the difficulty lies—for judges,
True learned judges, are grown scarce, and Æschylus
Objected to the Athenians absolutely.
Xan. Considering them as rogues and villains mostly.[4]
Æacus. As being ignorant and empty generally;
And in their judgment of the stage particularly.

[1] See p. 5. Sophocles was noted for a mild, easy character.
[2] Cleidemides, the favourite actor of Sophocles.
[3] In one of the latter scenes of this play, the two poets put single verses into the opposite scales of a balance.
[4] Consequently belonging to the faction before mentioned.

In fine, they've fix'd upon that master of yours,
As having had some practice in the business.
But we must wait within—for when our masters
Are warm and eager, stripes and blows ensue.

CHORUS.

The full-mouth'd master of the tragic quire,
We shall behold him foam with rage and ire;
—Confronting in the list
His eager, shrewd, sharp-tooth'd antagonist.
Then will his visual orbs be wildly whirl'd
And huge invectives will be hurl'd
  Superb and supercilious,
  Atrocious, atrabilious,
With furious gesture and with lips of foam,
And lion crest unconscious of the comb;
Erect with rage—his brow's impending gloom
O'ershadowing his dark eyes' terrific blaze.
  The opponent, dexterous and wary,
  Will fend and parry:
While masses of conglomerated phrase,
  Enormous, ponderous, and pedantic,
  With indignation frantic,
  And strength and force gigantic,
    Are desperately sped
    At his devoted head—
Then in different style
The touchstone and the file,
And subleties of art
In turn will play their part;
Analysis and rule,
And every modern tool;
With critic scratch and scribble,
And nice invidious nibble;
Contending for the important choice,
A vast expenditure of human voice!

Scene. EURIPIDES, BACCHUS, ÆSCHYLUS.

Eur. Don't give me your advice, I claim the seat
As being a better and superior artist.

Bac. What, Æschylus, don't you speak? you hear his language.
Eur. He's mustering up a grand commanding visage
—A silent attitude—the common trick
That he begins with in his tragedies.[1]
Bac. Come, have a care, my friend—You'll say too much.
Eur. I know the man of old—I've scrutinised
And shown him long ago for what he is,
A rude unbridled tongue, a haughty spirit;
Proud, arrogant, and insolently pompous;
Rough, clownish, boisterous, and overbearing.
Æs. Say'st thou me so? [2] Thou bastard of the earth,
With thy patch'd robes and rags of sentiment
Raked from the streets and stitch'd and tack'd together!
Thou mumping, whining, beggarly hypocrite!
But you shall pay for it.
Bac. (*in addressing Æschylus attempts to speak in more elevated style*). There now, Æschylus,
You grow too warm. Restrain your ireful mood.
Æs. Yes; but I'll seize that sturdy beggar first,
And search and strip him bare of his pretensions.
Bac. Quick! Quick! A sacrifice to the winds—Make ready;
The storm of rage is gathering. Bring a victim.[3]
Æs. —A wretch that has corrupted everything;
Our music with his melodies from Crete;
Our morals with incestuous tragedies.[4]
Bac. Dear, worthy Æschylus, contain yourself,
And as for you, Euripides, move off
This instant, if you're wise; I give you warning.
Or else, with one of his big thumping phrases,
You'll get your brains dash'd out, and all your notions
And sentiments and matter mash'd to pieces.
—And thee, most noble Æschylus (*as above*), I beseech
With mild demeanour calm and affable
To hear and answer.—For it ill beseems
Illustrious bards to scold like market-women.

[1] See p. 50. The instances of Niobe and Achilles.
[2] Æschylus was of a resolute, uncompromising character, proud of his ancient descent, of his own valour and that of his family. Euripides' mother was of a very low caste.
[3] Bacchus does not call for a sacrifice. It is his buffoonish way of saying that Æschylus is going to be in a *stormy* passion.
[4] The stories of Phædra and Canace.

But you roar out and bellow like a furnace.

Eur. (*in the tone of a town blackguard working himself up for a quarrel*).

I'm up to it.—I'm resolved, and here I stand
Ready and steady—take what course you will;
Let him be first to speak, or else let me.
I'll match my plots and characters against him;
My sentiments and language, and what not:
Ay! and my music too, my Meleager,
My Æolus and my Telephus and all.

Bac. Well, Æschylus,—determine. What say you?

Æs. (*speaks in a tone of grave manly despondency*).

I wish the place of trial had been elsewhere,
I stand at disadvantage here.

Bac. As how?

Æs. Because my poems live on earth above,
And his died with him, and descended here,
And are at hand as ready witnesses;
But you decide the matter: I submit.

Bac. (*with official pertness and importance*).

Come—let them bring me fire and frankincense,
That I may offer vows and make oblations
For an ingenious critical conclusion
To this same elegant and clever trial—

(*To the Chorus.*)

And you too,—sing me a hymn there.—To the Muses.

CHORUS.[1]

To the Heavenly Nine we petition,
Ye, that on earth or in air are for ever kindly protecting the vagaries of learned ambition,
And at your ease from above our sense and folly directing (or poetical contests inspecting,
Deign to behold for a while as a scene of amusing attention, all the struggles of style and invention),
Aid, and assist, and attend, and afford to the furious authors your refined and enlighten'd suggestions;
Grant them ability—force and agility, quick recollections, and address in their answers and questions,

[1] An attempt is here made to give some idea of the metre of the original, a mixture of the anapæst and hexameter.

Pithy replies, with a word to the wise, and pulling and hauling,
with inordinate uproar and bawling,
Driving and drawing, like carpenters sawing, their dramas asunder:
With suspended sense and wonder,
All are waiting and attending
On the conflict now depending!

Bac. Come, say your prayers, you two before the trial.

[*Æschylus offers incense.*

Æs. O Ceres, nourisher of my soul, maintain me
A worthy follower of thy mysteries.[1]

Bac. (*to Euripides*). There, you there, make your offering.

Eur. Well, I will;
But I direct myself to other deities.

Bac. Hey, what? Your own? some new ones?

Eur. Most assuredly!

Bac. Well! Pray away, then—to your own new deities.

[*Euripides offers incense.*

Eur. Thou foodful Air, the nurse of all my notions;
And ye, the organic powers of sense and speech,
And keen refined olfactory discernment,
Assist my present search for faults and errors.

CHORUS.

Here beside you, here are we,
Eager all to hear and see
This abstruse and mighty battle
Of profound and learned prattle.
—But, as it appears to me,
Thus the course of it will be;
He, the junior and appellant,
Will advance as the assailant.
Aiming shrewd satyric darts
At his rival's noble parts;
And with sallies sharp and keen
Try to wound him in the spleen,
While the veteran rends and raises
Rifted, rough, uprooted phrases,

[1] The first idea of tragedy was derived from the scenic exhibitions in the mysteries of *Ceres*, where they formed a part of the initiatory rites.

Wielded like a threshing staff
Scattering the dust and chaff.

The metre which follows is so essentially vulgar that I am not able to recollect any line of it in English which is fit to be quoted.

Bac. Come, now begin, dispute away, but first I give you notice
That every phrase in your discourse must be refined, avoiding
Vulgar absurd comparisons, and awkward silly joking.
Eur. At the first outset, I forbear to state my own pretensions;
Hereafter I shall mention them, when his have been refuted;
After I shall have fairly shown, how he befool'd and cheated
The rustic audience that he found, which Phrynichus[1] bequeathed him.
He planted first upon the stage a figure veil'd and muffled,
An Achilles or a Niobe, that never show'd their faces;
But kept a tragic attitude, without a word to utter.
Bac. No more they did: 'tis very true.
Eur. —In the meanwhile the Chorus
Strung on ten strophes right-an-end, but they remain'd in silence.
Bac. I liked that silence well enough, as well, perhaps, or better
Than those new talking characters—
Eur. That's from your want of judgment,
Believe me.
Bac. Why, perhaps it is; but what was his intention?
Eur. Why, mere conceit and insolence; to keep the people waiting
Till Niobe should deign to speak, to drive his drama forward.
Bac. O what a rascal. Now I see the tricks he used to play me.

[*To Æschylus, who is showing signs of indignation by various contortions.*

—What makes you writhe and winch about?—
Eur. Because he feels my censures.
—Then having dragg'd and drawl'd along, half-way to the conclusion,
He foisted in a dozen words of noisy boisterous accent,
With lofty plumes and shaggy brows, mere bugbears of the language.

[1] The earliest tragic poet whose dramas were in any degree esteemed among the ancients.

That no man ever heard before.—

Æs. Alas! alas!

Bac. (*to Æschylus*). Have done there!

Eur. He never used a simple word.

Bac. (*to Æschylus*). Don't grind your teeth so strangely.

Eur. But "Bulwarks and Scamanders" and "Hippogrifs and Gorgons."

"On burnish'd shields emboss'd in brass;" bloody remorseless phrases

Which nobody could understand.

Bac. Well, I confess, for my part,

I used to keep awake at night, with guesses and conjectures

To think what kind of foreign bird he meant by griffin-horses.

Æs. A figure on the heads of ships; you goose, you must have seen them.

Bac. Well, from the likeness, I declare, I took it for Eruxis.[1]

Eur. So! Figures from the heads of ships are fit for tragic diction.

Æs. Well then—thou paltry wretch, explain. What were your own devices?

Eur. Not stories about flying-stags, like yours, and griffin-horses;

Nor terms nor images derived from tapestry Persian hangings.

When I received the Muse from you I found her puff'd and pamper'd[2]

With pompous sentences and terms, a cumbrous huge virago.

My first attention was applied to make her look genteelly;

And bring her to a slighter shape by dint of lighter diet:

I fed her with plain household phrase, and cool familiar salad,

With water-gruel episode, with sentimental jelly,

With moral mincemeat; till at length I brought her into compass;

Cephisophon, who was my cook, contrived to make them relish.

I kept my plots distinct and clear, and, to prevent confusion,

My leading characters rehearsed their pedigrees for prologues.

Æs. 'Twas well, at least, that you forbore to quote your own extraction.

[1] The Scholiast informs us that he was eminent for ugliness.

[2] Euripides speaks in the style of the basest of all occupations; the speculator in female slaves—the leno of Terence.

Eur. From the first opening of the scene, all persons were in action;
The master spoke, the slave replied, the women, young and old ones,
All had their equal share of talk—
Æs. Come, then, stand forth and tell us,
What forfeit less than death is due for such an innovation?
Eur. I did it upon principle, from democratic motives.
Bac. [1]Take care, my friend—upon that ground your footing is but ticklish.
Eur. I taught these youths to speechify.
Æs. I say so too.—Moreover
I say that—for the public good—you ought to have been hang'd first.
Eur. The rules and forms of rhetoric,—the laws of composition,
To prate—to state—and in debate to meet a question fairly:
At a dead lift to turn and shift—to make a nice distinction.
Æs. I grant it all—I make it all—my ground of accusation.
Eur. The whole in cases and concerns occurring and recurring
At every turn and every day domestic and familiar,
So that the audience, one and all, from personal experience,
Were competent to judge the piece, and form a fair opinion
Whether my scenes and sentiments agreed with truth and nature.
I never took them by surprise to storm their understandings,
With Memnons and Tydides's and idle rattle-trappings
Of battle-steeds and clattering shields to scare them from their senses;
But for a test (perhaps the best) our pupils and adherents
May be distinguish'd instantly by person and behaviour;
His are Phormisius the rough, Meganetes the gloomy,[2]
Hobgoblin-headed, trumpet-mouth'd, grim-visaged, ugly-bearded;
But mine are Cleitophon the smooth,—Theramenes the gentle.
Bac. Theramenes—a clever hand, a universal genius,
I never found him at a loss in all the turns of party

[1] The philosophic sect to which Euripides belonged were known to be hostile to the democracy.

[2] Of these personages the Scholiast tells us that Phormisius wore a long beard, and affected to be formidable; and that Meganetes was a bold, rough soldier;—for Theramenes, see p. 28; for his past conduct, see Mr. Mitford, ch. 19, sect. 7, and ch. 20, sect. 3, and for his subsequent, sect. 5.

To change his watchword at a word or at a moment's warning.
Eur. Thus it was that I began,
With a nicer, neater plan;
Teaching men to look about,
Both within doors and without;
To direct their own affairs,
And their house and household wares;
Marking everything amiss—
"Where is that? and—What is this?"
"This is broken—that is gone,"
'Tis the modern style and tone.[1]
Bac. Yes, by Jove—and at their homes
Nowadays each master comes,
Of a sudden bolting in
With an uproar and a din;
Rating all the servants round,
"If it's lost, it must be found.
Why was all the garlic wasted?
There, that honey has been tasted:
And these olives pilfer'd here.
Where's the pot we bought last year?
What's become of all the fish?
Which of you has broke the dish?"
Thus it is, but heretofore,
The moment that they cross'd the door,
They sat them down to doze and snore.

CHORUS.

"Noble Achilles! you see the disaster,
The shame and affront, and an enemy nigh!"[2]
Oh! bethink thee, mighty master,
Think betimes of your reply;
Yet beware, lest anger force
Your hasty chariot from the course;
Grievous charges have been heard,
With many a sharp and bitter word,
Notwithstanding, mighty chief,

[1] General distress had produced a stricter economy, which is here humorously attributed to the precepts of Euripides.
[2] From Æschylus's tragedy of *The Myrmidons*, which opened with the death of Patroclus and the defeat of the Greeks.

Let Prudence fold her cautious reef
In your anger's swelling sail;
By degrees you may prevail,
But beware of your behaviour
Till the wind is in your favour:
Now for your answer, illustrious architect,
Founder of lofty theatrical lays!
Patron in chief of our tragical trumperies!
Open the floodgate of figure and phrase!

Æs. My spirit is kindled with anger and shame,
To so base a competitor forced to reply,
But I needs must retort, or the wretch will report
That he left me refuted and foil'd in debate;
Tell me then, What are the principal merits
Entitling a poet to praise and renown?
Eur. The improvement of morals, the progress of mind,
When a poet, by skill and invention,
Can render his audience virtuous and wise.
Æs. But if you, by neglect or intention,
Have done the reverse, and from brave honest spirits
Depraved, and have left them degraded and base,
Tell me, what punishment ought you to suffer?
Bac. Death, to be sure!—Take that answer from me.
Æs. Observe then, and mark, what our citizens were,
When first from my care they were trusted to you;
Not scoundrel informers, or paltry buffoons,
Evading the services due to the state;
But with hearts all on fire, for adventure and war,
Distinguished for hardiness, stature, and strength,
Breathing forth nothing but lances and darts,
Arms, and equipment, and battle array,
Bucklers, and shields, and habergeons, and hauberks,
Helmets, and plumes, and heroic attire.
Bac. There he goes, hammering on with his helmets,
He'll be the death of me one of these days.[1]
Eur. But how did you manage to make 'em so manly,
What was the method, the means that you took?
Bac. Speak, Æschylus, speak, and behave yourself better,

[1] The phrase of a person complaining of a noisy trade—an armourer's shop next door.

And don't in your rage stand so silent and stern.
Æs. A drama, brimful with heroical spirit.
Eur. What did you call it?
Æs. "The Chiefs against Thebes,"
That inspired each spectator with martial ambition,
Courage, and ardour, and prowess, and pride.
Bac. But you did very wrong to encourage the Thebans.
Indeed, you deserve to be punish'd, you do,
For the Thebans are grown to be capital soldiers,
You've done us a mischief by that very thing.
Æs. The fault was your own, if you took other courses;
The lesson I taught was directed to you:
Then I gave you the glorious theme of "the Persians,"
Replete with sublime patriotical strains,
The record and example of noble achievement,
The delight of the city, the pride of the stage.[1]
Bac. I rejoiced, I confess, when the tidings were carried
To old King Darius, so long dead and buried,
And the chorus in concert kept wringing their hands,
Weeping and wailing, and crying, Alas!
Æs. Such is the duty, the task of a poet,
Fulfiling in honour his office and trust.
Look to traditional history—look
To antiquity, primitive, early, remote:
See there, what a blessing illustrious poets
Conferred on mankind, in the centuries past,
Orpheus instructed mankind in religion,
Reclaim'd them from bloodshed and barbarous rites:
Musæus deliver'd the doctrine of medicine,
And warnings prophetic for ages to come:
Next came old Hesiod, teaching us husbandry,
Ploughing, and sowing, and rural affairs,
Rural economy, rural astronomy,
Homely morality, labour, and thrift:
Homer himself, our adorable Homer,
What was his title to praise and renown?
What, but the worth of the lessons he taught us,
Discipline, arms, and equipment of war?

[1] In this play the ancient Persian councillors evoke the Ghost of Darius, and relate to him the calamitous result of his son's expedition against Greece.

Bac. Yes, but Pantacles [1] was never the wiser;
For in the procession he ought to have led,
When his helmet was tied, he kept puzzling, and tried
To fasten the crest on the crown of his head.
Æs. But other brave warriors and noble commanders
Were train'd in his lessons to valour and skill;
Such was the noble heroical Lamachus; [2]
Others besides were instructed by him;
And I, from his fragments ordaining a banquet,
Furnish'd and deck'd with majestical phrase,
Brought forward the models of ancient achievement,
Teucer, Patroclus, and chiefs of antiquity;
Raising and rousing Athenian hearts,
When the signal of onset was blown in their ear,
With a similar ardour to dare and to do;
But I never allow'd of your lewd Sthenobœas,
Or filthy, detestable Phædras—not I—
Indeed, I should doubt if my drama throughout
Exhibit an instance of woman in love.
Eur. No, you were too stern for an amorous turn,
For Venus and Cupid too stern and too stupid.
Æs. May they leave me at rest, and with peace in my breast,
And infest and pursue your kindred and you,
With the very same blow that despatch'd you below.[3]
Bac. That was well enough said; with the life that he led,
He himself in the end got a wound from a friend.
Eur. But what, after all, is the horrible mischief?
My poor Sthenobœas, what harm have they done?
Æs. The example is followed, the practice has gain'd,
And women of family, fortune, and worth,
Bewilder'd with shame in a passionate fury,
Have poison'd themselves for Bellerophon's sake,[4]

[1] Of Pantacles nothing is known but that he was laughed at for his awkwardness by the comic poets; probably an *absent man* not a usual character among the Athenians.

[2] Lamachus, killed at Syracuse—in the *Acharnians*, as a promoter of the war he is ridiculed, but without contempt; spoken of in the *Thesm.* with respect; and in the *Peace* with an evidently kind intention.

[3] Euripides' death is said to have been hastened by his wife's misconduct.

[4] In a tragedy of Euripides, now lost, Sthenobœa poisons herself for love of Bellerophon. Probably in some cases of female suicide, this tragedy of Euripides had held the same place that the *Phædon* of Plato does in the story of the death of Cato.

Eur. But at least you'll allow that I never invented it,
Phædra's affair was a matter of fact.
Æs. A fact, with a vengeance! but horrible facts
Should be buried in silence, not bruited abroad,
Nor brought forth on the stage, nor emblazon'd in poetry,
Children and boys have a teacher assign'd them—
The bard is a master for manhood and youth,
Bound to instruct them in virtue and truth,
Beholden and bound.
Eur. But is virtue a sound?
Can any mysterious virtue be found
In bombastical, huge, hyperbolical phrase?
Æs. Thou dirty, calamitous wretch, recollect
That exalted ideas of fancy require
To be clothed in a suitable vesture of phrase;
And that heroes and gods may be fairly supposed
Discoursing in words of a mightier import,
More lofty by far than the children of man;
As the pomp of apparel assign'd to their persons,
Produced on the stage and presented to view,
Surpasses in dignity, splendour, and lustre
Our popular garb and domestic attire,
A practice which nature and reason allow,
But which you disannull'd and rejected.
Eur. As how?
Æs. When you brought forth your kings, in a villainous fashion,
In patches and rags, as a claim for compassion.
Eur. And this is a grave misdemeanour, forsooth!
Æs. It has taught an example of sordid untruth;
For the rich of the city, that ought to equip,
And to serve with, a ship, are appealing to pity,
Pretending distress—with an overworn dress.
Bac. By Jove, so they do; with a waistcoat brand new,
Worn closely within, warm and new for the skin;
And if they escape in this beggarly shape,
You'll meet 'em at market, I warrant 'em all,
Buying the best at the fishmonger's stall.
Æs. He has taught every soul to sophisticate truth;
And debauch'd all the bodies and minds of the youth;
Leaving them morbid, and pallid, and spare;
And the places of exercise vacant and bare:—

The disorder has spread to the fleet and the crew;
The service is ruin'd, and ruin'd by you—
With prate and debate in a mutinous state;
Whereas, in my day, 'twas a different way;
Nothing they said, nor knew nothing to say,
But to call for their porridge, and cry, "Pull away."

Bac. Yes—yes, they knew this,
How to f . . . in the teeth
Of the rower beneath;
And befoul their own comrades,
And pillage ashore;
But now they forget the command of the oar:—
Prating and splashing,
Discussing and dashing,
They steer here and there,
With their eyes in the air,
Hither and thither,
Nobody knows whither.

Æs. Can the reprobate mark in the course he has run,
One crime unattempted, a mischief undone?
With his horrible passions, of sisters and brothers,
And sons-in-law, tempted by villainous mothers,
And temples defiled with a bastardly birth,
And women, divested of honour or worth,
That talk about life "as a death upon earth;"
And sophistical frauds and rhetorical bawds;
Till now the whole state is infested with tribes
Of scriveners and scribblers, and rascally scribes—
All practice of masculine vigour and pride,
Our wrestling and running, are all laid aside,
And we see that the city can hardly provide
For the Feast of the Founder, a racer of force
To carry the torch and accomplish a course.

Bac. Well, I laugh'd till I cried
The last festival tide,
At the fellow that ran,—
'Twas a heavy fat man,
And he panted and hobbled,
And stumbled and wabbled,
And the pottery people about the gate,
Seeing him hurried, and tired, and late,

Stood to receive him in open rank,
Helping him on with a hearty spank
Over the shoulder and over the flank,
The flank, the loin, the back, the shoulders,
With shouts of applause from all beholders;
While he ran on with a filthy fright,
Puffing his link to keep it alight.

If the table of contents assigned to the primitive comedy should be thought too scanty, we may venture to add to it all those regular debates, which are managed by two disputants acting alternately as opponent and respondent, in which the chorus appears as the moderator and generally (though in the present instance that office is assigned to Bacchus) as the judge of the controversy, the arguments on both sides, the attack and the reply, being regularly preceded by a short exhortation from the chorus. Formal disputation of this kind would be wholly out of place in comedy (such as we generally conceive it, namely, a comedy consisting of dramatic action); accordingly, no instance of the kind is to be found, I believe, in modern comedy, or in what was called the *new* comedy of the Greeks, the remains of which have been preserved to us in the translations of Plautus and Terence. It should seem therefore that the frequent recurrence of this sort of disputations in the comedies of Aristophanes can hardly be accounted for in any way more probably than by supposing them to have existed in the *primitive* comedy, that undramatic form, from which the *ancient* (as it is called) or Aristophanic form was immediately derived.

We may venture therefore to enumerate, among the constituent parts of the primitive undramatic comedy, controversies upon debated points or upon a comparison of their own respective merits, in which two disputants were engaged with the chorus presiding as judge and moderator.

If this inference is not strictly logical, it may at least be allowed to be geological. The primary stratum of primitive comedy is lost—but a conjecture may be formed as to its composition by observing those substances, which, though they abound in the strata of transition, are no longer discoverable in those of more recent formation. We conclude that such substances must have formed a component part of that elder stratum which has disappeared. In the case now before us the stratum of transition is the *ancient* or Aristophanic comedy, forming a connecting link between the *primitive undramatic* comedy and the *new* comedy of the Greeks (the comedy of Menander and Terence), the character of which is exclusively dramatic and in no respect different from that of modern comedy. In this view of the subject the *middle* comedy (as it was called by the critics of antiquity) is not taken into account; it was, in fact, merely a mutilated form of the Aristophanic comedy stripped of its chorus, of its personalities, and of its privileges of political satire—it is identified with the ancient or Aristophanic comedy by its main characteristic, the utter impossibility of the story; and upon this ground stands (equally with the ancient comedy) in direct contrast with the new comedy, in which (as in modern comedy) an adherence to the probabilities of real life is an essential requisite. The ancient comedy, amidst its infinite variety

of supernatural and incredible subjects, admitted burlesque representations of mythological and heroic traditions, and among the titles of his comedies that are lost, the *Dædalus*, the *Danaids*, the *Lemnian Women* (or the story of Jason and Hypsipyle) prove that Aristophanes, even before the suppression of the genuine ancient comedy, did not neglect subjects of this kind. Cratinus, too, who died long before that period, among the scanty fragments that remain of him, has still left in existence a single line from a comedy representing Ulysses in the cave of the Cyclops. But subjects of this kind formed the main resource of the writers of the middle comedy, and their productions of this description were much more numerous. Therefore, as the result of this digression, it may be allowable to observe, if nobody should have observed it before, that (in addition to the *Plutus* of Aristophanes) the *Amphitryon* of Plautus (undoubtedly translated from Greek) may be regarded as a specimen of the middle comedy of the Greeks; and this result, however interesting, being not much to the purpose of the present translation, we will proceed forthwith to the lines in which the chorus perform their part in animating and encouraging the disputants.

CHORUS.

Ere the prize is lost and won
Mighty doings will be done.
Now then—(though to judge aright
Is difficult, when force and might
Are opposed with ready slight,
When the Champion that is cast
Tumbles uppermost at last)[1]
—Since you meet in equal match,
Argue, contradict and scratch,
Scuffle, and abuse and bite,
Tear and fight,
With all your wits and all your might.
—Fear not for a want of sense
Or judgment in your audience,
That defect has been removed;[2]
They're prodigiously improved,
Disciplined, alert and smart,
Drill'd and exercised in art:
Each has got a little book,
In the which they read and look,

[1] An allusion to the combats of the Pancratium, in which all means of attack and defence were employed, as they are by the rival poets in the scenes which follow.

[2] Here is a little coaxing to the audience, but also a little irony. I suspect that Aristophanes was no great friend to reading and writing as compared with the ancient system of memory and recitation.

Doing all their best endeavour
To be critical and clever;
Thus their own ingenious natures,
Aided and improved by learning,
Will provide you with spectators
Shrewd, attentive, and discerning.

The altercation which follows, turning upon a question of verbal criticism, is incapable of an exact translation. The attack with its answer occupies about forty-five lines in the original; Euripides begins it, saying that his opponent is incorrect in his use of words, and offers to prove it from those parts of his tragedies which were usually the most carefully composed (the opening speeches, or prologues as they were called).—He then calls upon Æschylus to repeat the first lines from the tragedy of Orestes; in this tragedy Orestes is represented as having returned secretly to Argos, standing at the tomb of his father, and invoking Mercury (not the vulgar patron of thieves and pedlars and spies), but that more awful deity, the terrestrial Hermes, the guardian of the dead, and inspector-general of the infernal regions, the care of which had been delegated to him by the paternal authority of Jupiter.

The obscurity and ambiguity of the original may be represented by the following lines:—

Terrestrial Hermes with supreme espial,
Inspector of that old paternal realm,
Aid and assist me now, you suppliant,
Revisiting and returning to my country!

This is variously misinterpreted. The *espial* is supposed to refer to the treason practised against Agamemnon,—the *paternal realm* to be that of Argos; and the last line is objected to as containing a tautology;—Æschylus defends himself by the explanation of his meaning, which has been already given, and in answer to the last objection contends that for an exile to *revisit* his country and to *return* to it is not the same thing: to which Euripides replies:

It is not justly express'd, since he return'd
Clandestinely without authority.
Bac. That's well remark'd; but I don't comprehend it.
Eur. (*tauntingly and coolly*).
Proceed—Continue!
Bac. (*jealous of his authority*). Yes, you must continue,
Æschylus, I command you to continue.
(*To Euripides.*)
And you, keep a look-out and mark his blunders.
Æs. "From his sepulchral mound I call my father
"To listen and hear"—
Eur. There's a tautology!

" To listen and hear "—

Bac. Why, don't you see, you ruffian!
It's a dead man he's calling to—Three times [1]
We call to 'em, but they can't be made to hear.

Æs. And you: your prologues, of what kind were they?

Eur. I'll show ye; and if you'll point out a tautology,
Or a single word clapt in to botch a verse—
That's all!—I'll give you leave to spit upon me.

Bac. (*with an absurd air of patience and resignation*).
Well, I can't help myself; I'm bound to attend.
Begin then with these same fine-spoken prologues.

Eur. " Œdipus was at first a happy man." . . .

Æs. Not he, by Jove!—but born to misery;
Predicted and predestined by an oracle
Before his birth to murder his own father!
—Could he have been " at first a happy man? "

Eur. . . . " But afterwards became a wretched mortal."

Æs. By no means! he continued to be wretched,
—Born wretched, and exposed as soon as born
Upon a potsherd in a winter's night;
Brought up a foundling with disabled feet;
Then married—a young man to an aged woman,
That proved to be his mother—whereupon
He tore his eyes out.

Bac. To complete his happiness,
He ought to have served at sea with Erasinides.[2]

Æschylus then attacks Euripides for the monotony of his metre, and the continued recurrence of a pause on the fifth syllable, which he ridicules by a burlesque addition subjoined to all the verses in which this cadence is detected. The point and humour of this supplementary phrase is not explained to us by the ancient Scholiasts, nor has the industry of modern commentators enabled them to detect it. Euripides repeats the first lines of several of his tragedies, but falls perpetually upon the same pause, and is met at every turn with the absurd supplement, till Bacchus calls out to him—

There!—that's enough—now come to music, can't ye?

Eur. I mean it; I shall now proceed to expose him
As a bad composer, awkward, uninventive,
Repeating the same strain perpetually.—

[1] The custom at funerals of invoking the dead by name three times.

[2] Erasinides was condemned to death with five of his colleagues in command, immediately after having obtained the naval victory at Arginusæ. See Mitford, ch. 20, sect. 2 and 3.

CHORUS.

I stand in wonder and perplext
To think of what will follow next.
Will he dare to criticise
The noble bard, that did devise
Our oldest, boldest harmonies,
Whose mighty music we revere?
Much I marvel, much I fear.—

Eur. Mighty fine music, truly! I'll give ye a sample;
It's every inch cut out to the same pattern.

Of the part of the entertainment which followed, however amusing it might have been to the musical critics of Athens, it is impossible for a modern to form any satisfactory notion. It consisted of a musical burlesque, in which each of the rival candidates (Euripides and Æschylus) is represented as exhibiting a caricature of the style of his opponent. This caricature seems to have consisted of a series of musical phrases selected from their works, but (as the music was the only object, while the words served only to indicate the music which was attached to them) the words which now remain alone (the music having shared the common fate of all the other music of the ancients) presents little more than a jumble of sentences incapable of being connected by any continuous meaning. We have seen that Æschylus is accused of repeating the same strain perpetually—this, it should seem, was exemplified by bringing together passages from the choruses of different plays, which were marked by the recurrence of the same *musical phrase*. The Scholiasts point out passages from the choruses of four plays which are thus brought into juxtaposition; but the main subject of burlesque appears to have been a chorus from the tragedy of the *Myrmidons* (the soldiers of Achilles) in which they were represented as addressing their chief after the death of Patroclus and the discomfiture of the Greeks. We may easily suppose that the peculiarities of Æschylus's style would be most strongly exemplified in a chorus composed of such characters.

It might have been deemed allowable, and perhaps advisable (after the explanation already given), to relinquish any attempt at representing what is so little capable of being represented; but as nature in general, and the nature of translation more particularly, abhors a vacuum, a few lines are put together in an Æschylean metre, which may serve as a substitute to fill up the chasm, and to represent the chorus (that of the *Myrmidons*) which was the chief subject of this burlesque criticism. It must be left to the musical reader, if the reader should happen to be musical, to imagine to himself a noisy, boisterous accompaniment on a wind instrument. Though perhaps his imagination might be more amusingly employed in conceiving a similar scene of contest between the great musical favourites of the last and the present century, between Gluck or Handel, for instance, and Rossini.

Bac. I'll mark—I've pick'd these pebbles up for counters.
Eur. Noble Achilles! Forth to the rescue!

Forth to the rescue with ready support!
Hasten and go,
There is havoc and woe,
Hasty defeat,
And a bloody retreat,
Confusion and rout,
And the terrible shout
Of a conquering foe,
Tribulation and woe!

Bac. Whoh hoh there! we've had woes enough, I reckon;
Therefore I'll go to wash away my woe
In a warm bath.

Eur. No, do pray wait an instant,
And let me give you first another strain,
Transferr'd to the stage from music to the lyre.[1]

Bac. Proceed then—only give us no more woes.

Eur. The supremacy sceptre and haughty command
Of the Grecian land—with a flatto-flatto-flatto-thrat—
And the ravenous sphinx, with her horrible brood,
Thirsting for blood—with a flatto-flatto-flatto-thrat,
And armies equipt for a vengeful assault,
For Paris's fault—with a flatto-flatto-flatto-thrat.

Bac. What herb is that same flatto-thrat? some simple,
I guess, you met with in the field of Marathon:
—But such a tune as this! you must have learnt it
From fellows hauling buckets at the well.[2]

Æs. Such were the strains I purified and brought
To just perfection—taught by Phrynichus,
Not copying him, but culling other flowers
From those fair meadows which the Muses love—
—But he filches and begs, adapts and borrows
Snatches of tunes from minstrels in the street,
Strumpets and vagabonds—the lullabys
Of nurses and old women—jigs and ballads—
I'll give ye a proof—Bring me a lyre here, somebody.

[1] Is Æschylus censured for adapting music composed for the lyre to the accompaniment of wind instruments, which is indicated by nonsensical imitative sounds?

[2] Music is apt to be vulgarised by continued popularity. In Goldsmith's time the minuet in *Ariadne* had become a tune for a dancing bear. The shabby old Juryman in the *Wasps* sings Phrynichus's music. Yet Phrynichus is classed with Anacreon and Alcæus as a great improver and master in music.

What signifies a lyre? the castanets
Will suit him better—Bring the castanets,
With Euripides's Muse to snap her fingers
In cadence to her master's compositions.

Bac. This Muse, I take it, is a Lesbian Muse.[1]

Æs. Gentle halcyons, ye that lave
Your snowy plume,
Sporting on the summer wave;
Ye too that around the room,
On the rafters of the roof
Strain aloft your airy woof;
Ye spiders, spiders ever spinning,
Never ending, still beginning—
Where the dolphin loves to follow,
Weltering in the surge's hollow,
Dear to Neptune and Apollo;
By the seamen understood
Ominous of harm or good;
In capricious, eager sallies,
Chasing, racing round the galleys.

What follows is not very intelligible; it should seem that Æschylus beats the measure of the music which he ridicules. He says, *Do you see this foot?* or (as the Scholiast explains it) *this rhythm?* to which Bacchus answers, *I see it*—

Æs. Well now. Do you see this? *Bac.* I see it—

After which Æschylus turns to his antagonist:

Such is your music. I shall now proceed
To give a specimen of your monodies[2]—

The Burlesque which follows admits of a tolerably close translation.

O dreary shades of night!
What phantoms of affright
Have scared my troubled sense
With saucer eyes immense;
And huge horrific paws
With bloody claws!

[1] The Lesbian women were of very bad fame.

[2] Monodies—verses sung by a single actor unaccompanied by the chorus. The burlesque turns upon the faults of Euripides' style, the false sublime —the vulgar pathetic; and impertinent supplications for divine assistance.

Ye maidens haste, and bring
From the fair spring
A bucket of fresh water; whose clear stream
May purify me from this dreadful dream:
But oh! my dream is out!
Ye maidens search about!
O mighty powers of mercy, can it be;
That Glyke, Glyke, she
(My friend and civil neighbour heretofore),
Has robb'd my henroost of its feather'd store?
With the dawn I was beginning,
Spinning, spinning, spinning, spinning,
Unconscious of the meditated crime;
Meaning to sell by yarn at market-time.
Now tears alone are left me,
My neighbour hath bereft me,
Of all—of all—of all—all but a tear!
Since he, my faithful trusty chanticleer
Is flown—is flown!—Is gone—is gone!
—But, O ye nymphs of sacred Ida,[1] bring
Torches and bows, with arrows on the string;
And search around
All the suspected ground:
And thou, fair huntress of the sky;
Deign to attend, descending from on high—
—While Hecate, with her tremendous torch,
Even from the topmost garret to the porch
Explores the premises with search exact,
To find the thief and ascertain the fact—

Bac. Come, no more songs!

Æs. I've had enough of 'em;
For my part, I shall bring him to the balance,
As a true test of our poetic merit,
To prove the weight of our respective verses.

Bac. Well then, so be it—if it must be so,
That I'm to stand here like a cheesemonger
Retailing poetry with a pair of scales.

[*A huge pair of scales are here discovered on the stage.*

[1] There is a similar invocation in the *Lysistrata*, where the dawdling chorus, instead of going to put out the fire, stand with buckets of water in their hands, praying to Minerva to bring more water.

CHORUS.

Curious eager wits pursue
Strange devices quaint and new,
Like the scene you witness here,
Unaccountable and queer;
I myself, if merely told it,
If I did not here behold it,
Should have deem'd it utter folly,
Craziness and nonsense wholly.

Bac. Move up; stand close to the balance!
Eur. Here are we—
Bac. Take hold now, and each of you repeat a verse,
And don't leave go before I call to you!
Eur. We're ready.
Bac. Now, then, each repeat a verse,
Eur. "I wish that Argo with her woven wings."[1]
Æs. "O streams of Sperchius, and ye pastured plains."[2]
Bac. Let go!—See now—this scale outweighs that other
Very considerably—
Eur. How did it happen?
Bac. He slipp'd a river in, like the wool-jobbers,
To moisten his metre—but your line was light,
A thing with wings—ready to fly away.
Eur. Let him try once again then, and take hold.
Bac. Take hold once more.
Eur. We're ready.
Bac. Now repeat.
Eur. "Speech is the temple and altar of persuasion."[3]
Æs. "Death is a God that loves no sacrifice."[4]
Bac. Let go!—See there again! This scale sinks down;
No wonder that it should, with Death put into it,
The heaviest of all calamities.
Eur. But I put in persuasion finely express'd
In the best terms.
Bac. Perhaps so; but persuasion

[1] The first line of the *Medea*, still existing.
[2] From the *Philoctetes*, now lost.
[3] From the *Antigone*, now lost.
[4] From the *Niobe*, now lost.

Is soft and light and silly—Think of something
That's heavy and huge, to outweigh him, something solid.
Eur. Let's see—Where have I got it? Something solid?
Bac. "Achilles has thrown twice—Twice a deuce ace!" [1]
Come now, one trial more; this is the last.
Eur. "He grasp'd a mighty mace of massy weight." [2]
Æs. "Cars upon cars, and corpses heap'd pell mell." [3]
Bac. He has nick'd you again—
Eur. Why so? What has he done?
Bac. He has heap'd ye up cars and corpses, such a load
As twenty Egyptian labourers could not carry—[4]
Æs. Come, no more single lines—let him bring all,
His wife, his children, his Cephisophon,
His books [5] and everything, himself to boot—
I'll counterpoise them with a couple of lines.
Bac. Well, they're both friends of mine—I shan't decide
To get myself ill-will from either party;
One of them seems extraordinary clever,
And the other suits my taste particularly.
Pluto. Won't you decide then, and conclude the business?
Bac. Suppose then I decide; what then?
Pluto. Then take him
Away with you, whichever you prefer,
As a present for your pains in coming down here.
Bac. Heaven bless ye—Well—let's see now—Can't ye advise me?
This is the case—I'm come in search of a poet—
Pluto. With what design?
Bac. With this design; to see
The City again restored to peace and wealth,
Exhibiting tragedies in a proper style.
—Therefore whichever gives the best advice

[1] That is Euripides (for Achilles)—has failed twice.—In the *Telephus* Euripides had represented Achilles playing at dice. This line was ridiculed by Eupolis.

[2] From the *Meleager* now lost.

[3] From a play called *Glaucus Potniensis*, of which the subject, I believe, is not known.

[4] The reconquest of Egypt by the Persians had driven the natives to seek subsistence with their allies at Athens. They are mentioned in the *Birds* as masons and artificers.

[5] Euripides was a collector of books. Cephisophon was the chief actor in Euripides' tragedies, and partly, it was said, the author of some of them.

On public matters I shall take him with me.
—First then of Alcibiades, what think ye?
The City is in hard labour with the question.
Eur. What are her sentiments towards him?
Bac. What?
"She loves and she detests and longs to have him." [1]
But tell me, both of you, your own opinions.
Eur. (*Euripides and Æschylus speak each in his own tragical style*). I hate the man, that in his country's service
Is slow, but ready and quick to work her harm;
Unserviceable except to serve himself.
Bac. Well said, by Jove!—Now you—Give us a sentence.
Æs. 'Tis rash and idle policy to foster
A lion's whelp within the city walls,
But when he's rear'd and grown you must indulge him.
Bac. By Jove then I'm quite puzzled; one of them
Has answer'd clearly, and the other sensibly:
But give us both of ye one more opinion;
—What means are left of safety for the state?
Eur. To tack Cinesias [2] like a pair of wings
To Cleocritus' shoulders, and dispatch them
From a precipice to sail across the seas.
Bac. It seems a joke; but there's some sense in it.
Eur. . . . Then being both equipp'd with little cruets
They might co-operate in a naval action,
By sprinkling vinegar in the enemies' eyes.
—But I can tell you and will.
Bac. Speak, and explain then—
Eur. If we mistrust where present trust is placed,
Trusting in what was heretofore mistrusted—[3]
Bac. How! What? I'm at a loss—Speak it again
Not quite so learnedly—more plainly and simply.
Eur. If we withdraw the confidence we placed

[1] From a verse of one of the tragedies of Ion of Chios.
[2] See above. He was a ridiculously slim figure, a dithyrambic poet and musician. Cleocritus appears afterwards as joined with Thrasybulus in the short civil war of the Piræus. He is ridiculed in the *Birds*.
[3] Under cover of ridiculing Euripides' style, harsh and obscure where it aspires to be sententious, and prosaic where it is meant to be familiar, Aristophanes contrives to impress and to repeat twice the same sentiment. In the *Acharnians* a caricature of Euripides' harangues serves as a cover for very bold opinions.

In these our present statesmen, and transfer it
To those whom we mistrusted heretofore,
This seems I think our fairest chance for safety:
If with our present counsellors we fail,
Then with their opposites we might succeed.

Bac. That's capitally said, my Palamedes![1]
My politician! was it all your own?
Your own invention?

Eur. All except the cruets;
That was a notion of Cephisophon's.

Bac. (*to Æschylus*). Now you—what say you?

Æs. Inform me about the city—
What kind of persons has she placed in office?
Does she promote the worthiest?

Bac. No, not she,
She can't abide 'em.

Æs. Rogues then she prefers?

Bac. Not altogether, she makes use of 'em
Perforce as it were.

Æs. Then who can hope to save
A state so wayward and perverse, that finds
No sort of habit fitted for her wear?
Drugget or superfine, nothing will suit her!

Bac. Do think a little how she can be saved.

Æs. Not here; when I return there, I shall speak.

Bac. No, do pray send some good advice before you.

Æs. When they regard their lands as enemy's ground,
Their enemy's possessions as their own,
Their seamen and the fleet their only safeguard,
Their sole resource hardship and poverty,
And resolute endurance in distress—

Bac. That's well,—but juries eat up everything,
And we shall lose our supper if we stay.[2]

Pluto. Decide then—

Bac. You'll decide for your own selves,[3]
I'll make a choice according to my fancy.

[1] Euripides had written a tragedy on the death of Palamedes, describing him as a most wise and virtuous politician.

[2] A double allusion to the pay of the juries which drained the treasury, and to the hurry of the comedians, poets, actors, and *judges*, to go to the supper which concluded the business of the day.

[3] Addressed by the actor to the judges of the prize.

Eur. Remember, then, your oath to your poor friend;
And, as you swore and promised, rescue me.
Bac. "It was my tongue that swore"[1]—I fix on Æschylus.
Eur. O wretch! what have you done?
Bac. Me? done? What should I?
Voted for Æschylus to be sure—Why not?
Eur. And after such a villainous act, you dare
To view me face to face—Art not ashamed?
Bac. Why shame, in point of fact, is nothing real:
Shame is the apprehension of a vision
Reflected from the surface of opinion—
—The opinion of the public—they must judge.
Eur. O cruel!—Will you abandon me to death?
Bac. Why perhaps death is life, and life is death,
And victuals and drink an illusion of the senses;
For what is Death but an eternal sleep?
And does not Life consist in sleeping and eating?
Pluto. Now, Bacchus, you'll come here with us within.
Bac. (*a little startled and alarmed*).
What for?[2]
Pluto. To be received and entertain'd
With a feast before you go.
Bac. That's well imagined,
With all my heart—I've not the least objection.

CHORUS.

Happy is the man possessing
The superior holy blessing
Of a judgment and a taste
Accurate, refined and chaste;[3]
As it plainly doth appear
In the scene presented here;

[1] A line in the *Hippolytus* which had given great offence.—Here and in what follows, Bacchus pays Euripides in his own philosophic coin vulgarised after his own (Bacchus's) fashion. The intention of the author has been made clearer by a little amplification.

[2] See Peisthetairus in the *Birds*, when he is invited to the mansion of the Hoopoe.

[3] The style of the original seems to be taken from that of the moral and instructive verse intended for the improvement of children and young persons.

Where the noble worthy Bard
Meets with a deserved reward,
Suffer'd to depart in peace
Freely with a full release,
To revisit once again
His kindred and his countrymen—
Hence moreover
You discover,
That to sit with Socrates,
In a dream of learned ease;[1]
Quibbling, counter-quibbling, prating,
Argufying and debating
With the metaphysic sect,
Daily sinking in neglect,
Growing careless, incorrect,
While the practice and the rules
Of the true poetic Schools
Are renounced or slighted wholly,
Is a madness and a folly.

PLUTO.

Go forth with good wishes and hearty good-will,
And salute the good people on Pallas's hill;
Let them hear and admire father Æschylus still
In his office of old which again he must fill:
—You must guide and direct them,
Instruct and correct them,
With a lesson in verse,
For you'll find them much worse;
Greater fools than before, and their folly much more,
And more numerous far than the blockheads of yore—
—And give Cleophon[2] this,
And bid him not miss,
But be sure to attend
To the summons I send:

[1] It is curious to see Aristophanes' opinion as to the cause of the defects which he so frequently notices in Euripides; namely, that they arose from an indolent philosophic curiosity, and the want of a true zeal for the perfection of his art.

[2] Other names of obscure demagogues occur in the original.

To Nicomachus [1] too,
And the rest of the crew
That devise and invent
New taxes and tribute,
Are summonses sent,
Which you'll mind to distribute.
Bid them come to their graves,
Or, like runaway slaves,
If they linger and fail,
We shall drag them to jail;
Down here in the dark
With a brand and a mark.

Æs. I shall do as you say;
But the while I'm away,
Let the seat that I held
Be by Sophocles fill'd,
As deservedly reckon'd
My pupil and second
In learning and merit
And tragical spirit—
And take special care;
Keep that reprobate there
Far aloof from the Chair;
Let him never sit in it
An hour or a minute,
By chance or design
To profane what was mine.

Pluto. Bring forward the torches!—The Chorus shall wait
And attend on the Poet in triumph and state
With a thundering chaunt of majestical tone
To wish him farewell, with a tune of his own.

[Hexameters.]

In order to give English Hexameters a fair chance, it should be recollected that they are essentially a very slow and solemn measure, each line consisting of six bars, and each bar either of two crotchets, or of a crotchet and two quavers—whereas, the English Heroic verse contains only two bars and a half, and in those instances in which the half bar is placed at the end, may be regarded as a truncated form of the scazon Iambic: the regular metrical Hexameter may consequently be considered as somewhat longer, or slower at least in enunciation, than an entire Heroic couplet.

[1] Nicomachus, see Mitford's *History*, ch. 22, sect. 1.

The reader may perhaps observe an irregularity in the second line (what the grammarians call an Anacrousis—*i.e.* unaccented syllables prefixed to the first ictus); this would be inadmissible in the regular Classical Hexameter, but the irregularity is so little offensive to the ear that the writer in other attempts to construct English Hexameter has found himself in more than one instance unconsciously falling into it. He has therefore preferred to leave it as it stands, an instance of the liberty which may be deemed allowable in adapting to the English language this difficult, but by no means impracticable metre.

CHORUS.

Now may the powers of the earth give a safe and speedy departure
To the Bard at his second birth, with a prosperous happy revival;
And may the city, fatigued with wars and long revolution,
At length be brought to return to just and wise resolutions;
Long in peace to remain—Let restless Cleophon hasten
Far from amongst us here—since wars are his only diversion,
Thrace his native land will afford him wars in abundance.

THE TRIAL OF EURIPIDES

OR

"THE THESMOPHORIANS"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MNESILOCHUS, *father-in-law of Euripides.*
EURIPIDES.
SERVANT OF AGATHON.
AGATHON.
AGATHON'S CHORUS.
FEMALE HERALD.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.
CERTAIN WOMEN.
CLISTHENES.
PRYTANIS.
POLICEMAN.
DANCING-GIRL. } *Mutes.*
BOY. }

THE ARGUMENT

The *Thesmophoriazusæ* was acted Ol. 92, 1, in the archonship of Callias. The comedy has a proper intrigue, a knot which is not loosed till the conclusion, and in this therefore possesses a great advantage. Euripides, on account of the well-known hatred of women displayed in his tragedies, is accused and condemned at the Thesmophoria, at which festival women only were admitted. After a fruitless attempt to induce the effeminate poet Agathon to undertake the hazardous experiment, Euripides prevails on his father-in-law, Mnesilochus, who was somewhat advanced in years, to disguise himself as a woman, that under this assumed appearance he may plead his cause. The manner in which he does this gives rise to suspicions, and he is discovered to be a man; he flies to the altar for refuge, and to secure himself still more from the impending danger, he snatches a child from the arms of one of the women, and threatens to kill it if they do not let him alone. Upon examination, however, it turns out to be a wine-skin, wrapped up like a child. Euripides now appears in a number of different shapes to save his friend: at one time he is Menelaus, who finds Helen again in Egypt; at another time he is Echo, helping the chained Andromeda to pour out her lamentations, and immediately after he appears as Perseus, about to release her from the rock. At length he succeeds in rescuing Mnesilochus, who is fastened to a sort of pillory, by assuming the character of a procuress, and enticing away the officer of justice who has charge of him, a simple barbarian, by the charms of a dancing-girl. These parodied scenes, composed almost entirely in the very words of Euripides' tragedies, are inimitable. Whenever Euripides is introduced, we may always, generally speaking, lay our account with having the most ingenious and apposite ridicule: it seems as if the mind of Aristophanes possessed a peculiar and specific power of giving a comic turn to the poetry of this tragedian. Whatever be the faults of the present play, it will be very generally admitted to be the drollest and most facetious of all the writings of Aristophanes.

THE TRIAL OF EURIPIDES

SCENE.—The Front of Agathon's House.

Mnesilochus, Euripides.

Mnes. O Jupiter! will the swallow ever[1] appear? The man will kill me with dragging me about from early dawn! Is it possible, Euripides, before I lose my spleen entirely, to learn from you whither you are leading me?

Eur. (*with great seriousness*). Nay, you must[2] not hear all that you will soon see, being present.

Mnes. How say you? Tell it me again! Must I not hear?

Eur. Not what you are to see.

Mnes. Then must I not even see?

Eur. Not what you must hear.

Mnes. How do you advise me? Upon my word, you speak cleverly! You say I must neither hear nor see.

Eur. Not so; for, be well assured, the nature of each of them is distinct, of not hearing, and of not seeing.

Mnes. How distinct?

Eur. Thus have these been distinguished formerly. For Ether, when first it was separated, and in itself bore moving animals, first contrived an eye for that which ought to see, modelled after the sun's disk, and bored ears like a funnel.

Mnes. On account of the funnel, then, must I neither hear nor see? By Jove, I am delighted at having learned this in addition! What a thing, I ween, are learned conversazioni!

Eur. Many such matters mayest thou learn from me.

Mnes. Would, then, that, in addition to these good things, I could find out how I might still learn in addition to be lame in my legs.

[1] "As the appearance of the swallow in spring puts an end to winter, so the simple Mnesilochus wishes for some kind of a swallow to terminate his painful situation."—*Droysen.*

[2] "The rich jest of this exordium lies in the philosophical mannerism of Euripides, who is fond of using his odd figures and antitheses everywhere."—*Droysen.*

Eur. Come hither, and give me your attention!
Mnes. Well!
Eur. Do you see this little door?
Mnes. Yes, by Hercules, I think so!
Eur. Be silent then!
Mnes. Must I be silent about the little door?
Eur. Hear!
Mnes. Must I hear and be silent about the little door?
Eur. Here dwells the illustrious Agathon the tragic poet.
Mnes. Of what sort is this Agathon?
Eur. There is a certain Agathon——
Mnes. Is it the black, the strong one?
Eur. No; another one. Have you never seen him?
Mnes. Is it the shaggy-bearded one?
Eur. Have you never seen him?
Mnes. Certainly not, by Jove, as far as I know!
Eur. And yet you have coquetted with him, but you don't know it [1] perhaps. Come, let us crouch out of the way! for a domestic of his is coming out with fire and myrtle-wreaths. He seems about to make a previous sacrifice on behalf of his poetic composition. [*They retire to one side.*
Servant of Agathon (*coming out of the house*). Let all the people abstain from ill-omened words, having closed their mouths; for the company of the Muses is sojourning within my master's house, composing lyric poems. And let the breathless Ether check its blasts, and the azure wave of the sea not roar—
Mnes. Oh my!
Eur. Be silent! What are you saying?
Serv.—and let the race of birds be put to sleep, and the feet of savage wild beasts that roam the woods not be put in motion.
Mnes. Oh my gracious!
Serv. For the beautifully-speaking Agathon our chief is about—
Mnes. To be debauched?
Serv. Who's he that spoke?
Mnes. Breathless Ether.
Serv.—to lay the stocks,[2] the beginning of a drama. And

[1] "Euripides laughs at the effeminate poet, whom he is going to make use of as a woman, and at the same time discloses to Mnesilochus what sort of person this Agathon is."
[2] "δρύοχοι are the upright timbers supporting the keel, upon which

he is bending new felloes for verses: others he is turning on the lathe, other verses he is patching together; and he is coining maxims, and speaking in tropes, and is moulding as in wax, and is rounding, and is casting—

Mnes. And is wenching.

Serv. What rustic approaches our eaves?

Mnes. One who is ready to turn and whirl round and cast this toe of mine in the eaves of you and your beautifully-speaking poet.

Serv. Doubtless you were a rake, old man, when you were young.

Eur. My good sir, let this man go; but do you by all means call out Agathon hither to me!

Serv. Make no entreaty; for he himself will come out soon; for he is beginning to make lyric poems. In truth, when it is winter, it is not easy to bend the bow of the strophes, unless one come forth to the door to the sun. [*Exit.*

Mnes. What then shall I do?

Eur. Wait; for he is coming forth. O Jove, what do you purpose to do to me to-day?

Mnes. By the gods, I wish to learn what this business is. Why do you groan? Why are you vexed? You ought not to conceal it, being my son-in-law.

Eur. A great evil is ready kneaded for me.

Mnes. Of what kind?

Eur. On this day will be decided whether Euripides still lives or is undone.

Mnes. Why, how? For now neither the courts are about to judge causes, nor is there a sitting of the Senate; for it is the third [1] day, the middle of the Thesmophoria.

Eur. In truth, I expect this very thing even will destroy me. For the women have plotted against me, and are going to hold an assembly to-day about me in the temple of Demeter and Persephone for my destruction.

Mnes. Wherefore? why, pray?

Eur. Because I represent them in tragedy and speak ill of them.

the keel is laid when the shipwrights commence building a ship."—*Brunck.*

[1] " For this
Is the third day and midst of Ceres' feasts."—*Wheelwright.*

Mnes. And justly too would you suffer, by Neptune! But, as this is the case, what contrivance have you?

Eur. To persuade Agathon the tragic poet to go to the temple of Demeter and Persephone.

Mnes. What to do? Tell me!

Eur. To sit in assembly among the women, and to speak whatever is necessary in my defence.

Mnes. Openly, or secretly?

Eur. Secretly, clothed in a woman's stole.

Mnes. The device is a clever one, and exceedingly in conformity with your disposition; for ours is the prize for trickery.

[*The creaking of machinery is heard.*

Eur. Hush!

Mnes. What's the matter?

Eur. Agathon is coming out.

Mnes. Why, of what sort is he?

Eur. He who is being wheeled out.

[*The doors of the back scene are thrown open, and Agathon is wheeled in, fantastically dressed in women's clothes.*

Mnes. Assuredly I am blind; for I don't see any man here: I see Cyrene.

Eur. Hush! He is preparing again to sing.

Mnes. "The ant's paths?" or what is he plaintively singing?

Agath.[1] Damsels, take the torch sacred to the infernal *goddesses*, and, with a free country, raise a shout in the dance!

Cho. In honour of which of the gods is the ode? Tell us then! I am readily induced to honour the gods.

Agath. Come, then, Muse, glorify Phœbus, the drawer of the golden bow, who founded the walls of the city in the land of Simois!

Cho. Deign to accept our most noble strains, O Phœbus, who in musical honours bearest off the sacred prize!

Agath. And chant the maiden *dwelling* in oak-grown mountains, the huntress Diana!

Cho. I follow, celebrating and glorifying the revered offspring of Latona, the unwedded Diana.

Agath. And Latona, and the notes of the lyre accompanying the dances of the Phrygian graces in harmony with the foot.

[1] "What Agathon is here composing is, probably, not a festal ode for the Thesmophoria, but for some tragedy on the subject of Troy—a *Cassandra* perhaps. We must further imagine the whole to be accompanied by a thoroughly modern and effeminate style of voluptuous music."—*Droysen.*

Cho. I honour queen Latona, and the lyre, the mother of songs, with an approved masculine voice; by which light is kindled in divinely-inspired eyes, and by our sudden voice. On which account glorify king Phœbus with honours! Hail, happy child of Latona!

Mnes. How sweet the song, O venerable Genetyllides; how womanish, wanton, and seductive! So that, whilst I listened, a tickling passed under my very base. I wish, O youth, to ask you who you are, in the words of Æschylus in his Lycurgeia: of what land, you weakling? What's your country? What means the dress? what the confusion of fashions? What does the harp prattle to the saffron-coloured robe? what the lyre to the head-dress? What mean the oil-flask and the girdle? How unsuitable! What connection then between a mirror and a sword? And you yourself, O youth, are you reared as a man? Why, where are the tokens of a man? Where is your cloak? Where are your boots? Or as a woman then? Where then are your breasts? What do you say? Why are you silent? Nay, then, I'll judge of you from your song, since you are not willing to tell me yourself.

Agath. Old man, old man, I heard, indeed, the censure of your envy, but the pain I did not feel! I wear my attire in accordance with my thoughts. For it behoveth a poet, conformably to the dramas which he must compose, to have his turn of mind in accordance with these. For example, if one be composing female dramas, the body *of the poet* ought to have a participation in their manners.

Mnes. Therefore do you mount on horseback when you compose a Phædra?

Agath. But if one be composing male *dramas*, this is subsisting in the body. But what we do not possess, this now is found to be all imitation.

Mnes. When therefore you compose satyric dramas, call me, in order that I may actively compose poetry along with you in your rear.

Agath. Besides, it is unpolished to see a poet boorish and rough with hair. Consider that that well-known Ibycus, and Anacreon of Teos, and Alcæus, who softened down our music, wore a head-band, and practised soft Ionian airs; and that Phrynichus,—for you have certainly heard him,—was both handsome himself and dressed handsomely. On this account

then his dramas also were handsome: for it is unavoidable that one compose similarly to one's nature.

Mnes. On this account then Philocles, as he is ugly, composes uglily; and Xenocles, as he is vile, composes vilely; and Theognis, again, as he is frigid, composes frigidly.

Agath. Most unavoidably! For, assuredly, being aware of this, I paid attention to my person.

Mnes. How, by the gods?

Eur. Cease to abuse! for I also was such a one, when I was his age, when I began to compose.

Mnes. By Jove, I do not envy you your training.

Eur. Yet suffer me to tell on what account I came.

Agath. Say on!

Eur. Agathon, "it suits a wise man, who is able briefly to abridge many words in a proper manner." But having been smitten by a new calamity, I have come to you as a suppliant.

Agath. In need of what?

Eur. The women purpose to destroy me to-day at the Thesmophoria, because I speak ill of them.

Agath. What aid then can you have from me?

Eur. All; for if you secretly take your seat amongst the women, so as to seem to be a woman, and defend me, you will assuredly save me: for you alone can speak in a manner worthy of me.

Agath. How then do you not defend yourself in person?

Eur. I will tell you. In the first place, I am known; next, I am grey headed and have a beard; while you are of a good countenance, fair, shaven, with a woman's voice, delicate, and comely to look at.

Agath. Euripides——

Eur. What's the matter?

Agath. Did you ever compose *this verse?* "You take pleasure in beholding the light; and do you not think your father takes pleasure *in beholding it?*"

Eur. I did.

Agath. Don't expect then that I will undergo your misfortune *for you:* for I should be mad. But bear yourself what is yours, as a private matter. For it is not right to bear one's calamities with artifices, but with endurance.

Mnes. And yet you, you lewd fellow, are . . . , not through words, but through endurance.

Eur. But what is it, for which you fear to go thither?

Agath. I should perish more miserably than you.

Eur. How?

Agath. How?—seeming to steal the nightly labours of the women, and to filch away the women's love.

Mnes. "Steal," quoth'a! Nay, rather, by Jove, to be ravished! But, by Jove, the pretext is plausible.

Eur. What then? Will you do this?

Agath. Don't imagine it!

Eur. Oh thrice-unlucky! how I am undone!

Mnes. Euripides, my dearest, my son-in-law, do not abandon yourself!

Eur. How then, pray, shall I act?

Mnes. Bid a long farewell to this fellow, and take and use me as you please.

Eur. Come then, since you give yourself up to me, strip off this garment!

Mnes. Well now, *it is* on the ground. But what are you going to do to me?

Eur. To shave those cheeks clean, but singe clear the parts below.

Mnes. Well, do whatever you think fit! or I ought never to have given myself up to you.

Eur. Agathon, you, of course, always carry a razor,—now lend us a razor!

Agath. Take it from thence yourself out of the razor-case.

Eur. (*to Agathon*). You are very good! (*To Mnesilochus.*) Sit yourself down! Puff out your right cheek!

[*Mnesilochus sits down and Euripides commences shaving.*

Mnes. Ah me!

Eur. Why do you cry out? I'll put a gag in your mouth, if you don't be silent.

Mnes. Alas! woe is me!

[*Mnesilochus starts up and attempts to run away.*

Eur. Hollo you! whither are you running?

Mnes. To the temple of the august goddesses; for, by Ceres, I will not stay here any longer, being gashed!

Eur. Will you not then be ridiculous, pray, with the one half of your face shaved?

Mnes. I little care.

Eur. By the gods, by no means abandon me! Come hither!

[*Takes him by the arm and makes him sit down again.*

Mnes. Ah me, miserable!

Eur. Keep quiet, and lift up your head! Whither are you turning?

Mnes. Mu! mu!

Eur. Why do you mutter? Everything has been accomplished well.

Mnes. Ah me, miserable! Then I shall serve as a light-armed [1] soldier!

Eur. Don't be concerned about it; for you shall appear very comely. Do you wish to see yourself?

Mnes. If you think fit, give me *the looking-glass!*

Eur. Do you see yourself?

Mnes. No, by Jove, but Clisthenes!

Eur. Stand up, that I may singe you; and stoop forwards!

Mnes. Ah me, miserable; I shall become as smooth as a sucking pig.

Eur. Let some one bring a torch or a lamp from within! (*To Mnesilochus.*) Bend yourself forwards! Take care now of your extremities! [*Euripides begins to singe him.*

Mnes. It shall be my care, by Jove! only that I am burning. Ah me, miserable! Water, water, neighbours, before the flame take hold of me.

Eur. Be of good courage!

Mnes. How be of good courage, when I'm quite burnt up?

Eur. But you've no further trouble now; for you have finished the greatest part.

Mnes. Foh! oh, what soot! I have become burnt all round about.

Eur. Don't be concerned! for another shall bring you a sponge.

Mnes. He shall weep then, whoever shall be sponge-bearer.

Eur. Agathon, since you grudge to give yourself up to me, at any rate at least lend us a dress for this man, and a girdle; for you will not say that you haven't them.

Agath. Take and use them! I don't grudge them.

Mnes. What then shall I take?

Agath. What? First take and put on the saffron-coloured robe.

[1] "The joke turns upon the ambiguity of the word ψιλός, which signifies a *light-armed soldier*, as well as *clean-shaved*. There is the same ambiguity in the Latin word *levis*."—*Brunck*.

Mnes. By Venus, it smells sweet! Gird me up quickly! Now bring me a girdle! [*Euripides brings a girdle.*

Eur. There!

Mnes. Come then, fit me out about the legs.

Eur. We want a head-dress and headband.

Agath. Nay, rather, see here's a woman's cap to put round him, which I wear by night!

Eur. By Jove, but it's even very suitable!

Mnes. Will it fit me? [*Puts it on.*

Agath. By Jove, but it's capital!

Eur. Bring an upper garment!

Agath. Take it from the little coach.

Eur. We want shoes.

Agath. Here, take mine!

Mnes. Will they fit me? At all events you like to wear them loose.

Agath. Do you see to this! But indeed you have what you want. Let some one wheel me in as quickly as possible.

[*Exit Agathon.*

Eur. (*surveying Mnesilochus' attire*). He, though a man, is now a woman in appearance. If you speak, see that you talk like a woman in your voice, well and naturally.

Mnes. I will try.

Eur. Go then!

Mnes. No, by Apollo! unless you swear to me—

Eur. What?

Mnes.—that you will help to deliver me with all your arts, if any misfortune befall me.

Eur. "I swear then by Ether, the dwelling of Jove."

Mnes. Why rather than by the lodging of Hippocrates? [1]

Eur. I swear then by all your gods in a lump.[2]

Mnes. Remember this then, that "your mind[3] swore, but your tongue has not sworn;" neither will I bind *it* by an oath.

[*Shouts of women are heard. The scene is changed to a temple.*

[1] "The sons of Hippocrates were frequently ridiculed by the comedians for their stupidity."

[2] It would seem to be a parody upon Eurip. *Med.* 746. Fritzsche discovers in the line an allusion to the contemptuous atheism so generally attributed to Euripides. Schlegel. *Dram. Lit.* p. 116.

[3] A parody on Eurip. *Hippol.* 612, *ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.* It is parodied again ap. Ran. 1471, and *ibid* vs. 101.

Eur. Hasten quickly; for the signal for the assembly in the temple of Ceres is exhibited; but I will be off. [*Exit Euripides.*

Mnes. Come on then, Thratta, follow me! See, Thratta, what a quantity of smoke ascends as the torches burn! Come, O very-beautiful Thesmophoræ, receive me with good luck, both on my entrance here, and on my return home again! Thratta, take down the box, and then take out a cake, that I may take and offer it to the two goddesses. O highly-honoured mistress, dear Demeter, and thou, Persephone, let me, possessing much, often sacrifice to thee! but if not, now at least be undiscovered; and let my daughter, my pig, meet with a husband who is rich, and besides, silly and stupid! and let my little boy have sense and understanding! Where, where shall I sit down in a good place, that I may hear the orators? Do you, Thratta, be off out of the way! for it is not permitted slaves to hear the words.

FEMALE HERALD.

Her. Let there be solemn silence! Let there be solemn silence! Pray to the Thesmophoræ, Demeter, and Cora, and to Plutus, and to Calligenia, and to Tellus, nurse of youths, and to Mercury, and to the Graces, to convene this assembly and the present meeting in the most becoming and most profitable manner:—very beneficially for the state of the Athenians, and fortunately for ourselves; and that she may get her opinion passed, who acts and speaks the best for the people of the Athenians and that of the women. Pray for these things, and for yourselves what is good. Io Pæan! io Pæan! Let us rejoice!

CHORUS OF WOMEN KEEPING THE THESMOPHORIA.

Cho. We accept *the omen*, and supplicate the race of the gods to appear and take pleasure in these prayers. O Jove of great renown! and thou with golden lyre, who inhabitest sacred Delos! and thou, all powerful damsel, grey-eyed, with spear of gold, who inhabitest a desirable city, come hither! and thou of many names, damsel slaying wild beasts, offspring of golden-eyed Latona! and thou marine, august Neptune, lord of the sea, having left thy fishy, storm-vexed recess! and ye daughters of marine Nereus! and ye mountain-roaming nymphs! And

let the golden lyre accompany our prayers; and may we well-born Athenian women bring our debates to an accomplishment.

Her. Pray to the Olympic gods and to the Olympic goddesses, and to the Pythian gods and to the Pythian goddesses, and to the Delian gods and to the Delian goddesses, and to the other deities; if any one plots any evil against the people of the women, or makes proposals of peace to Euripides and the Persians for the purpose of any injury to the women, or purposes to be a tyrant,[1] or to join in bringing back the tyrant, or has denounced *a woman* so substituting a child, or if any woman's female slave, being a go-between, has whispered the matter in her master's ear, or if any, when sent, brings lying messages, or if any paramour deceives by telling falsehoods, and does not give what he shall have formerly promised, or if any old woman gives presents to a paramour, or even if a mistress receives *presents*, betraying her friend, and if any male or female publican falsifies the legal measure of the gallon or the half-pint: pray that he may perish miserably, himself and family! but pray that the gods may give many blessings to all the rest of you.

Cho. We offer our united prayers that these wishes may come to be accomplished for the state, and accomplished for the people; and that those women who give the best advice (as many as this befalls) may get their opinions passed. But as many as for the sake of gain deceive, and violate the established oaths for the purpose of injury, or seek to revolutionise decrees and law, and tell our secrets to our enemies, or bring in the Persians for the purpose of injury to the country, act wickedly and injure the state. But, O all-powerful Jove, mayest thou accomplish this, so that the gods stand by us, although we are women.

Her. Hear, every one! (*Unfolds a paper and begins to read the preliminary decree.*) "These things have been determined on by the Senate of the women: Timoclea was president, Lysilla was secretary, Sostrata moved the decree; to convene an assembly in the morning in the middle of the Thesmophoria, when we are most at leisure; and to debate first about Euripides, what he ought to suffer; for he has been adjudged guilty by us all." Who wishes to speak?

[1] "When the Pisistratidæ were ejected from Athens, the people decreed that in every assembly of the people the crier should imprecate curses on him who should aim at a tyranny."

1st Woman. I.

Her. Then first put on this *crown* before you speak. (*To the meeting.*) Be silent! Be quiet! Give attention! for she is now expectorating, as the orators do. She seems to be going to make a long speech.

1st Woman. Through no ostentatiousness, by the two goddesses, have I stood up to speak, O women; but indeed I have been vexed, unhappy woman, now for a long time, seeing you treated with contumely by Euripides the son of the herb-woman, and abused with much abuse of every kind. For what abuse does he not smear upon us? And where has he not calumniated us, where, in short, are spectators, and tragic actors, and choruses? calling us adulteresses in disposition, lovers of men, wine-bibbers, traitresses, gossips, masses of wickedness, pests to mankind. So that, as soon as they come in from the wooden-benches, they look askance at us, and straightway search, lest any lover be concealed in the house. And we are no longer able to do any of those things which we formerly did: such badness has he taught our husbands. So that, if even any woman weave a crown, she is thought to be in love; and if she let fall any vessel while roaming about the house, her husband asks her, "In whose honour is the pot broken? It must be for the Corinthian[1] stranger." Is any girl sick; straightway her brother says, "This colour in the girl does not please me." Well; does any woman, lacking children, wish to substitute a child; it is not possible even for this to go undiscovered; for now the husbands sit down beside them. And he has calumniated us to the old men, who heretofore used to marry girls; so that no old man is willing to marry a woman, on account of this verse, "For[2] a woman is ruler over an old bridegroom." In the next place, through him they now put seals and bolts upon the women's apartments, guarding us; and moreover they keep Molossian dogs, a terror to lovers. And this, indeed, is pardonable; but as for what was permitted us heretofore, to be ourselves the housekeepers, and to draw forth and take barley-meal, oil, and wine; not

[1] "In derision of a passage in the *Sthenobœa* of Euripides, which is preserved in Athenæus, x. p. 427, E." "According to a custom among the Greeks, whatever fell accidentally from the hand was consecrated to lost friends."—*Droysen.* Aristophanes reflects at the same time upon the immorality of the Corinthians.

[2] This verse is a quotation from the *Phœnix* of Euripides, Frag. v.

even this is any longer permitted us. For the husbands now themselves carry secret little keys, most ill-natured, certain Spartan ones with three teeth. Previously, indeed, it was possible at least to secretly open the door, if we got a three-obol seal-ring made. But now this home-born slave Euripides has taught them to have rings of worm-eaten wood, having them suspended about them. Now therefore I move that we mix up some destruction in some way or other for him, either by poison, or by some one artifice, so that he shall perish. These I speak openly; but the rest I will draw up in the form of a motion in conjunction with the secretary.

Cho. Never yet did I hear a woman more intriguing than this, nor one that spoke more ably. For she speaks all justly, and has well examined all appearances, and weighed all things in her mind, and shrewdly discovered artful, well-invented words; so that, if Xenocles the son of Carcinus were to speak immediately after her, he would appear to us all, as I think, to say absolutely nothing to the purpose.

2nd Woman. For the purpose of a few words I also have come forward. For the other matters she has laid to his charge rightly: but what I have suffered *personally*, these I wish to state. My husband died in Cyprus, having left behind him five little children, whom I used to maintain with difficulty by plaiting wreaths in the myrtle-wreath-market. Before this I supported myself, indeed, but miserably. But now this fellow by representing in his tragedies, has persuaded the people that there are no gods; so that we do not now earn even to the amount of one half. Now therefore I exhort and charge all to punish this man for many reasons; for, O women, he does savage deeds to us, as having been reared himself among the potherbs in their wild state. But I will be off to the market-place; for I have twenty bespoken wreaths to plait for people.

Cho. This other disposition, again, appears still cleverer than the former one. How she talked! not what was ill-timed, nor yet what was void of understanding, but all persuasive, being possessed of sense and a subtle mind. The man must manifestly give us satisfaction for this insolence.

Mnes. It is not wonderful, O women, that you who are so abused should be exceedingly exasperated at Euripides, nor yet that your bile should boil over; for I myself hate that man,

if I be not mad,—so may I be blessed in my children! But nevertheless we must grant the privilege of speaking amongst each other; for we are by ourselves, and there is no blabbing of our conversation. Why thus do we accuse him, and are vexed, if, being cognisant of two or three misdeeds of ours, he has said them of us who perpetrate innumerable? For I myself, in the first place—not to speak of any one else—am conscious with myself of many shameful acts: at all events of that most shameful one, when I was a bride of three days, and my husband was sleeping beside me. Now I had a friend, who had known me from seven years of age. He, through love of me, came and began scratching at the door; and then I immediately understood it; and then I was for going down secretly, but my husband asked me, "Whither are you going down?" "Whither?—A colic and pain, husband, possesses me in my stomach; therefore I am going below." "Go then!" said he. And then he began pounding juniper berries, anise, and sage. But after I had poured some water on the hinge, I went out to my lover; and then I conversed with him beside the statue of Apollo, holding by the bay-tree. These, you see, Euripides never yet at any time spoke of. Nor does he mention how we give ourselves up to our slaves and to muleteers, if we have not any other. Nor how, when we junket ever so much during the night, we chew garlic in the morning, in order that the husband having smelt it when he comes in from the wall, may not suspect us of doing anything bad. These things, you see, he has never at any time spoken of. And if he does abuse a Phædra, what is this to us? Neither has he ever mentioned that, how that well-known woman, while showing her husband at day-break how beautiful her upper garment is, sent out her lover hidden in it—*that* he has never yet mentioned. And I know another woman, who for ten days said she was in labour, till she purchased a little child; while her husband went about purchasing drugs to procure a quick delivery. But the child an old woman brought in a pot with its mouth stopped with honeycomb, that it might not squall. Then, when she that carried it nodded, *the wife* immediately cried out, "Go away, husband, go away, for methinks I shall be immediately delivered." For *the child* kicked against the bottom of the pot. And he ran off delighted, while she drew out *the stoppage* from the mouth of the child, and it cried out. And then the abominable

old woman who brought the child, runs smiling to the husband, and says, "A lion has been born to you, a lion! your very image, both in all other respects whatever, and its nose is like yours, being crooked like an acorn-cup." Do we not practise these wicked acts? Yea, by Diana, do we! And then are we angry at Euripides, "who have suffered nothing greater than we have committed?"

Cho. This certainly is wonderful, where the creature was found, and what land reared this so audacious *woman.* For I did not think the villainous *woman* would even ever have dared thus shamelessly to say this publicly amongst us. But now everything may take place. I commend the old proverb, "For we must look about under every stone, lest an orator bite us." But indeed there existeth not anything more wicked for all purposes than women shameless by nature,—unless perhaps it be women.

3rd Woman. You are certainly not in your right senses, women, by Aglaurus! But you have either been bewitched, or have suffered some other great evil, who permit this pestilent creature to wantonly insult us all in such a manner. If indeed there be any one *who will do it, it is well;* but if not, we ourselves and our slaves, having got ashes from some quarter, will depilate her, so that she may be taught, woman as she is, henceforth not to speak ill of women.

Mnes. Nay not that, I pray, O women. For if, when there was freedom of speech and it was permitted *us all* to speak, as many citizens as are present, I then spoke what pleas I knew in defence of Euripides, ought I on this account to suffer punishment by you?

3rd Woman. Why, ought you not to suffer punishment? who alone has dared to reply in defence of a man, who has done us many injuries, purposely devising tragedies where a woman has been vile, writing plays on Melanippes and Phædras.[1] But he never at any time wrote a play on Penelope, because she has been adjudged to be a chaste woman.

Mnes. I know the reason. For you could not mention a single Penelope among the women of the present day, but Phædras every one.

[1] Euripides never wrote a play and called it *Phædra.* The allusion is to his first *Hippolytus*, which was more frequently called his *Phædra*, from the prominence of that character, as Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* might be called *Brutus.*

3rd Woman. You hear, women, what things the villainous *woman* has again said of us all.

Mnes. And, by Jove, too, I have not yet mentioned as many as I am cognisant of! For would you that I mention more?

3rd Woman. Nay, you cannot any further; for you have poured forth all that you knew.

Mnes. No, by Jove, not yet the ten-thousandth part of what we do! For, you see, I have not mentioned this, how we take strigils[1] and then draw off the wine with a siphon.

3rd Woman. You be hanged!

Mnes. And how, again, while we give the meats from the Apaturia to our go-betweens, we then say that the cat——

3rd Woman. Me miserable! you talk nonsense.

Mnes. Nor have I mentioned how another struck down her husband with the axe; nor how another drove her husband mad with philtres; nor how the Acharnian woman once buried——

3rd Woman. May you utterly perish!

Mnes. —her father under the kitchen boiler.

3rd Woman. Are these, pray, endurable to hear?

Mnes. Nor how you, when your woman-slave had borne a male child, then substituted this for yourself, and gave up your little daughter to her.

3rd Woman. By the two goddesses, you certainly shall not get off with impunity for saying this! but I will twitch out your hairs.

Mnes. You shall not touch me, by Jove!

3rd Woman. Well now, see!

Mnes. Well now, see!

3rd Woman. Take my cloak, Philista! [*Strips off her cloak.*

Mnes. Only put *your hand* upon me, and, by Diana, I will——

3rd Woman. What will you do?

Mnes. I'll make you give up this sesame-cake which you have devoured!

Cho. Cease railing at one another; for some woman is running towards us in haste. Therefore, before she is near, be ye silent, in order that we may hear decorously what she is going to say.

[1] "Aristophanes makes the women use *both* a strigil and a siphon. For first they take a strigil *through want of a cup, and then* they draw off the wine *with a siphon.*"

Enter CLISTHENES.

Clisth. O women dear, ye kindred of my disposition, I show by my cheeks that I am a friend to you; for I am woman-mad, and am always your patron. And now having heard an important matter about you, which was canvassed a little before in the market-place, I have come to tell it and announce it to you, in order that you may see and take care, lest a terrible and important affair come suddenly upon you off your guard.

Cho. What is it, boy? for 'tis natural to call you boy, as long as you have your cheeks thus smooth.

Clisth. They say that Euripides has sent a man up hither to-day his own father-in-law, an old man.

Cho. For what deed? for the purpose of what design?

Clisth. In order that he might be a spy upon your words, whatever you deliberated and purposed to do.

Cho. Why, how was a man among women without being detected?

Clisth. Euripides singed and shaved him, and dressed him up like a woman in all other respects.

Mnes. Do you believe him in this? What man is so foolish, as to bear to have his hairs plucked out? I don't believe it, O ye highly-honoured goddesses!

Clisth. You talk foolishly; for I would not have come to report it, if I had not heard this from those who clearly knew.

Cho. This affair is a dreadful one which is announced. Come, women, we ought not to be idle, but to look out for the man, and search where he has secretly taken his seat unknown to us. And do you (*turning to Clisthenes*), our patron, help to find him out! so that you may have thanks for this as well as for that.

Clisth. Come, let me see! (*Turning to one of the women.*) First, who are you?

Mnes. (*aside*). Whither can one turn?

Clisth. For you must be examined.

Mnes. (*aside*). Me miserable!

4th Woman. Did you ask me, who I am? The wife of Cleonymus.

Clisth. Do you know who this woman is?

Cho. Oh yes, we know her! But examine the others.

Clisth. But who, pray, is this who has the child?

4th Woman. My nurse, by Jupiter!

Mnes. (*aside*). I am undone! [*Attempts to slip away.*

Clisth. (*turning to Mnesilochus*). Hollo you! whither are you turning? Stay here! What's your ailment?

Mnes. Permit me; a moment!

Clisth. You're a nice creature. Do you then retire a moment. I will wait here.

Cho. Pray do wait, and watch her carefully too! for she is the only one we don't know.

Clisth. You're a long time over it!

Mnes. Yes, by Jove, my good friend; for I suffer from strangury: I ate some nasturtium yesterday.

Clisth. Why do you chatter about nasturtium? Will you not come hither to me? [*Drags him away from the corner.*

Mnes. Why, pray, do you drag me when I am ill?

Clisth. Tell me, who's your husband?

Mnes. Do you inquire about my husband? Do you know What's his name, of the burgh of Cothocidæ?

Clisth. What's his name! What sort of a person?

Mnes. There is a What's his name, who once —— What d'ye call 'em, the son of What's his name——

Clisth. You appear to me to be talking nonsense. Have you ever come up hither before?

Mnes. Yes, by Jove, every year!

Clisth. And who is your messmate?

Mnes. Mine is What's her name. Ah me, miserable!

Clisth. You say nothing to the purpose.

Thereupon Clisthenes being sent away, the unfortunate Mnesilochus has to undergo a strict examination, and vainly trying to evade the questions put to him, is flagrantly detected as a man in disguise.

5th Woman. Oh, the horrible fellow! On this account then he reviled us in defence of Euripides.

Mnes. Me miserable! in what troubles have I involved myself!

5th Woman. Come now, what shall we do?

Clisth. Guard him properly, so that he shall not escape; and I'll report these to the Prytanes. [*Exit Clisthenes.*

Cho. Then we ought now after this to kindle our torches and gird ourselves up well and manfully, and strip off our garments and search, if perchance some other man too has entered, and

to run round the whole Thesmophorium[1] and the tents, and to examine closely the passages. Come then, first of all we ought to rouse a nimble foot and look about in every direction in silence. Only we must not loiter, since the time admits no further delay, but we ought now first to run as quickly as possible round about. Come then, search, and quickly investigate all parts, if any other, again, is secretly sitting in *these* places. Cast your eye round in every direction, and properly examine all parts, in this direction, and in that. For if he be detected after having done unholy deeds, he shall suffer punishment, and in addition to this shall be an example to all the others of insolence and unjust deeds and ungodly manners; and he shall say that there are evidently gods; and he shall be forthwith a witness to all men to honour the gods, and that they justly pursuing what is pious, and devising what is lawful, should do what is right. And if they do not do so, the following shall happen to them: when any of them is detected acting profanely, burning with madness, mad with frenzy, if he do anything, he shall be a conspicuous warning to all women and mortals to behold, that the god punishes what is unlawful and unholy, and it is done immediately. But it seems that pretty nigh all parts have been properly examined by us: at any rate we don't now see any other man sitting among us.

[*Mnesilochus snatches a child from the arms of one of the women.*

6th Woman. Ah! Whither are you flying? Ho you! Ho you! will you not stay? Me miserable! miserable! And he is gone, having snatched away my child from my breast.

Mnes. Bawl away; but this you shall never feed with morsels, unless you let me go; but here at the altars being struck with this sword upon its bloody veins, it shall stain the altar with blood.

6th Woman. Oh me miserable! Will you not succour me, women? Will you not raise a mighty and rout-causing shout, but suffer me to be deprived of my only child?

Cho. Ha! ha! O venerable Fates, what new portent, again, is this which I behold? How all then are deeds of audacity and shamelessness! What a deed is this, again, which he has done! what a deed, again, my friends!

[1] "The *Thesmophorium* might rightly be called the *Pnyx;* for in the temple, as though it were the Pnyx, was held the Assembly concerning Euripides."—*Fritzsche.* So also Enger.

Mnes. How I'll knock your excessive arrogance out of you!

Cho. Are not these, pray, shameful deeds and more than that?

6th Woman. Shameful certainly, if one has snatched away my child.

Cho. What then can one say to this, when this man is shameless enough to do such things?

Mnes. And, be assured, I have not done yet.

6th Woman. But certainly you have come whence you have come; and you shall not say after having easily escaped, what a deed you have done, and got off; but shall receive punishment.

Mnes. May this, however, by no means take place, I pray God!

Cho. Who then, who of the immortal gods, would come as your helper, with your unjust deeds?

Mnes. You talk in vain: her I will not let go.

Cho. But, by the two goddesses, perhaps you will not insult us with impunity, and speak unholy words. For we will requite you for these with ungodly deeds, as is reasonable: and perhaps some fortune, having cast you into an evil of a different kind, will restrain you. But (*turning to Mica*) you ought to take these *women-slaves*, and bring out some wood, and burn the villain to ashes, and destroy him with fire as soon as possible.

6th Woman. Let us go to fetch the brushwood, Mania.[1] And I'll make you (*addressing Mnesilochus*) to-day a hot coal.

Mnes. Set on fire and burn! But do you (*addressing the child*) quickly strip off your Cretan garment; and blame your mother alone of women for your death, child. (*Strips the child, whereupon it turns out to be a wine-skin dressed up like an infant.*) What's this? The girl has become a wine-skin[2] full of wine, and that too with Persian slippers. O ye most thirsty women, O most bibacious, and contriving by every device to tipple, O great blessing to publicans, but to us, on the contrary, a pest; and a pest to the warp and to the woof!

6th Woman. (*returning with a bundle of brushwood*). Heap up beside him abundant brushwood, Mania.

[1] The common name for a woman-servant, as Manes was for a man-servant.

[2] Cf. Shakespeare, *King Henry IV.*, part i. act v. sc. 3, where Prince Henry, on drawing out of Falstaff's pistol-case what he thinks is a pistol, finds it to be *a bottle of sack!* Cf. also Plautus, *Aulul.* ii. 66.

Mnes. Yes, heap it up! But do you answer me this question: do you say you bore this child?

6th Woman. Yes, and carried it ten months.

Mnes. Did you carry it?

6th Woman. Yea, by Diana!

Mnes. Holding three Cotylæ, or how? tell me!

[*Exposes the wine-skin to view.*

6th Woman. What have you done to me? You have stripped my child, you shameless fellow, being so little.

Mnes. So little?

6th Woman. Yes, by Jove, little!

Mnes. How many years old is it? three Choæ, or four?

6th Woman. About so much, and as long as since the Dionysia. But restore it.

Mnes. No, by this Apollo!

6th Woman. Then we'll set fire to you.

Mnes. Set fire by all means; but this shall be slaughtered forthwith.

6th Woman. Nay, do not, I beseech you; but do to me what you please instead of it.

Mnes. You are very fond of your children by nature: but this shall be slaughtered none the less.

6th Woman. Alas, my child! Give me a bowl, Mania; so that certainly I may at least catch the blood of my child.

Mnes. Hold it under, for I will gratify you in this one thing.

[*Drinks up the wine-skin himself.*

6th Woman. May you perish miserably! How grudging and malevolent you are!

Mnes. (*holding up the empty wine-skin*). This hide belongs to the priestess.

6th Woman. What belongs to the priestess?

Mnes. (*tossing her the empty wine-skin*). Take it!

7th Woman. Most wretched Mica, who has robbed you of your daughter? who has taken away your beloved child?

6th Woman. This villain! But since you are present, guard him, in order that I may take Clisthenes and tell to the Prytanes what this man has done. [*Exit 6th woman.*

Mnes. Come now, what shall be my contrivance for safety? what my attempt? what my device? For he who is the author *of this,* and who has involved me in such troubles, does not yet appear. Come, what messenger can I send to him? Now I

know a contrivance out of his Palamedes: I'll write upon the oars and throw them out, as that well-known character did. But the oars are not at hand. Whence therefore can it be possible for me to get oars? whence? But what if [1] I were to write on these here images instead of the oars, and throw them about? Much better! Certainly indeed both these are wood and those were wood. O hands of mine, you must take in hand a practicable deed! Come now, you plates of polished tablets, receive the traces of the graver, messengers of my miseries. Ah me, this Rho is a miserable one! through what a furrow it goes, it goes! Go ye, hasten through all roads, that way, this way! You ought speedily. [*Exit Mnesilochus.*

PARABASIS.

Cho. Let us then praise ourselves in our parabasis. And yet every one says many ill things of the race of women, that we are an utter evil [2] to men, and that all evils spring from us, strifes, quarrels, sedition, painful grief, and war. Come now, if we are an Evil, why do you marry us, if indeed we are really an Evil, and forbid *any of us* either to go out, or to be caught peeping out, but wish to guard the Evil with so great diligence? And if the wife should go out any whither, and you then should discover her to be out of doors, you rage with madness, who ought to offer libations and rejoice, if indeed you really find the Evil to be gone away from the house, and do not find it at home. And if we sleep in other people's houses, when we play and are tired, every one searches for this Evil, going round about the beds. And if we peep out of a window, he seeks to get a sight of the Evil. And if she retire again, being ashamed, so much the more does every one desire to see the Evil peep out again. So manifestly are we much better than you. And a test is at hand to see. Let us make trial, which of the two are worse. For we say that you are; but you say that we are. Let us consider now, and compare each with each, placing each name side by side, both the woman's and the man's. Char-

[1] A similar act of impiety is related of Diagoras the Melian. Being in want of firewood, he broke up a statue of Hercules for that purpose. "Mnesilochus inscribes his misfortune upon the busts and statues of the gods, of which there were several in the Thesmophorium, and throws them forth, so that he might send Euripides letters worthy of Euripides."—*Fritzsche.*

[2] A favourite epithet with Euripides. See *Hippol.* 616, 625, 628.

minus is inferior to Nausimache: his deeds are manifest. And in truth also Cleophon is, I ween, by all means inferior to Salabaccho. And none of you even attempts to contend with Aristomache for a long time, that notable one at Marathon, and with Stratonice. But what senator of those of last year, who delivered up his senatorial office to another, is superior to Eubule? Not even he himself will say this. So much better do we profess to be than the men. Neither would a woman who has stolen at the rate of fifty talents of the public money come into the city in a chariot; but when she may have committed her greatest peculations, when she has stolen a bushel of wheat from her husband, she restores them the same day. But we could point out many of these present who do this, and who are, in addition to this, more gluttonous than we, and footpads, and parasites, and kidnappers. And in truth also they are, I ween, inferior to us in preserving their patrimony. For still even now our loom is safe, our weaving-beam, our baskets, and our parasol; while the beam of many of these our husbands has perished from the house together with the head, and the parasol of many others has been cast from their shoulders in their expeditions. We women could justly and deservedly bring many charges against the men: but one most monstrous. For it were proper, if any of us bore a man serviceable to the state, a taxiarch or general, that she should receive some honour, and that precedence be given her at the Stenia and Scirophoria, and at the other festivals which we have been accustomed to keep. But if any woman bore a cowardly and worthless man, either a worthless trierarch or a bad pilot, that she should sit behind her who has borne the brave man, with her hair cut bowl-fashion. For how is it equitable, O city, that the mother of Hyperbolus should sit near the mother of Lamachus, clothed in white, and with loose flowing hair, and lend out money on usury? To whom, if she were to lend out to any one, and exact usury, no man ought to give any interest, but they ought to take away her money by force, saying this, "In sooth you're deserving of interest, having borne such produce."

Re-enter MNESILOCHUS.

Mnes. I've got a squint with looking for him; but he does not yet *appear*. What then can be the hinderance? It must

be that he is ashamed of his Palamedes because it is frigid. With what drama then can I draw him up? I know it! I'll imitate his new Helen. At all events I have a woman's dress.

7th Woman. What are you again plotting? or why do you look gaping about? You shall soon see a bitter Helen, if you will not be orderly, until some of the Prytanes come.

Mnes. (*as Helen*). "These are the streams of the Nile with beautiful nymphs, which, in place of rain from heaven, moistens the plain of white Egypt, a people using black draughts."

7th Woman. You're a knave, by the torch-bearing Hecate!

Mnes. "Not inglorious is my native land, Sparta, and Tyndareus is my sire."

7th Woman. Is he your father, you pest? Nay, rather, Phrynondas.

Mnes. "And I am called Helen."

7th Woman. Are you again becoming a woman, before you've suffered punishment for your former acting the woman?

Mnes. "And many men died on my account at the streams of the Scamander."

7th Woman. And would that you *had died* too.

Mnes. "And I am here; but my unhappy husband, my Menelaus, does not yet come. Why then do I still live?"

7th Woman. Through the laziness of the crows.

Mnes. "But something as it were cheers my heart. Do not cheat me of my coming hope, O Jove!"

Enter EURIPIDES *attired as Menelaus.*

Eur. "Who has the rule over these fortified mansions, who would receive strangers distressed with storm and shipwreck on the open sea?"

Mnes. "This is the house of Proteus."

Eur. "What Proteus?"

7th Woman. Oh thrice-unlucky! (*Turning to Euripides.*) He is telling lies, by the two goddesses! for Proteas has been dead these ten years.

Eur. "At what country have we landed with our ship?"

Mnes. "Egypt."

Eur. "O wretched! whither have we sailed!"

[1] "He means Euripides' play *Palamedes*." It formed part of a tetralogy consisting of the *Alexander*, *Palamedes*, *Troades*, *Sisyphus* (satyric drama). According to Ælian he was beaten on this occasion by Xenocles.

7th Woman. Do you believe this fellow at all—the devil take him—talking nonsense? This is the Thesmophorium.

Eur. "Is Proteus himself within, or out of sight?"

7th Woman. It must be that you are still sea-sick, stranger, who having heard that Proteus is dead, then ask if he is within, or out of sight.

Eur. "Alas, he is dead! Where has he been buried in the tomb?"

Mnes. "This is his tomb, upon which I am sitting."

7th Woman. Then may you perish miserably! and certainly indeed you will perish, who have the impudence to call the altar a tomb.

Eur. "Why, pray, do you sit in these sepulchral seats covered with a veil, O female stranger?"

Mnes. "I am forced to mingle in wedlock with the son of Proteus."

7th Woman. Wherefore, you wretch, are you again deceiving the stranger? (*To Euripides.*) This fellow, O stranger, acting the knave, came up hither to the women for the stealing of the gold.

Mnes. "Bark away, assailing me with censure."

Eur. "Female stranger, who is the old woman who reviles you?"

Mnes. "This is Theonoe, daughter of Proteus."

7th Woman. No, by the two goddesses! unless Critylla daughter of Antitheus of Gargettus *be so.* But you're a knave.

Mnes. "Say whatever you please. For I will never marry your brother, having abandoned Menelaus, my husband, in Troy."

Eur. "What say you, woman? Turn your sparkling eyes *towards mine.*"

Mnes. "I am ashamed before you, having been mauled in my cheeks."

Eur. "What's this? Speechlessness possesses me. Ye gods, what sight do I behold? Who art thou, woman?"

Mnes. "And who are you? for the same word holds you and me."

Eur. "Are you a Grecian woman, or a woman of this country?"

Mnes. "A Grecian woman. But I also wish to learn yours."

Eur. "I see you very like to Helen, woman."

Mnes. "And I you to Menelaus, as far as may be judged from the pot-herbs."

Eur. "Then you rightly recognise a most unfortunate man."

Mnes. "O thou who hast come late to the arms of thy wife! Take me, take me, husband! Throw thy arms around me! Come, let me kiss you! Take and lead me away, lead me away, lead me away, lead me away very quickly."

7th Woman. Then, by the two goddesses, he shall weep, whoever shall lead you away, being beaten with the torch.

Eur. "Do you hinder me from leading my wife, the daughter of Tyndareus, to Sparta?"

7th Woman. Ah me, what a knave you also appear to me to be, and this man's counsellor! No wonder you were acting the Egyptian this long while. But he shall suffer punishment; for the Prytanis is approaching, and the Policeman.

[*Goes towards them.*

Eur. This is unlucky. Well, I must sneak away.

Mnes. But what shall I do, unhappy man?

Eur. Remain quiet; for I will never abandon you, if I live; unless my innumerable artifices fail me. [*Exit Euripides.*

Mnes. This line has drawn up nothing.

Enter PRYTANIS *with a policeman.*

Pryt. Is this the knave of whom Clisthenes spoke to us? Ho you, why do you hang down your head? Lead him within, policeman, and bind him to the plank, and then place him here and guard him, and suffer no one to approach him; but beat them with your whip, if any approach.

7th Woman. Yes, by Jove! for now assuredly a tricky fellow almost took him away from me.

Mnes. O Prytanis, by your right hand, which you are accustomed to hold out bent, if any one offer you money, grant me a small favour, although about to die.

Pryt. In what shall I oblige you?

Mnes. Order the policeman to strip me naked and fasten me to the plank; in order that, being an old man, I may not in saffron-coloured robes, and a woman's night-cap, afford laughter to the crows, while I feast them.

Pryt. It has been determined by the Senate to bind you with them on, in order that you may be clearly seen by the passers-by to be a knave. [*Exit Prytanis.*

Mnes. Oh my! oh my! O saffron robe, what things you have done! No longer is there any hope of safety.

[*Policeman leads Mnesilochus within.*

Cho. Come now, let us sport, as is here the custom with the women, whenever on holy seasons we celebrate the solemn orgies of the two goddesses, which Pauson[1] also honours, and fasts, oftentimes protesting to them from season to season that such are frequently a care to himself. Put yourself in motion, each of you, advance, come on lightly with your feet in a circle, join hand to hand, move to the time of the dance; go with swift feet. It behoveth the choral order to look about, turning round the eye in every direction. And at the same time also celebrate, each of you, and honour with your voice, the race of the Olympic gods, with a mind mad for dancing. But if any one expects that I, woman as I am, will speak ill of men during the sacred rites, he does not think rightly. But it behoveth us immediately, as our duty is, first to dispose the graceful step of the circling dance. Advance with your feet, celebrating Apollo with beautiful lyre, and the bow-bearing Diana, chaste queen. Hail, thou far-darter, and grant us the victory! And let us celebrate, as is fitting, Juno who presides over marriage, who sports in all the dances, and keeps the keys of marriage. And I entreat the pastoral Mercury, and Pan, and the dear Nymphs, benevolently to smile upon and take pleasure in our dances. Begin now zealously the Diplë,[2] the joy of the dance. Let us sport, O women, as is the custom! Assuredly we keep the fast. But come! turn to another *measure* with foot keeping good time; round off the whole ode. And do thou thyself, O ivy-wreathed king Bacchus, lead us; and I will celebrate thee with chorus-loving odes, O Evius, O Bromius, child of Jove and Semele, delighting in dances, in the mountains among the pleasing hymns of the Nymphs, O Evius, Evius, beginning a choral dance, Evoe! And the echo of Cithæron resounds around thee, and the thick-shaded mountains dark with leaves

[1] He was a well-known painter of the day, and chiefly devoted himself to *caricatures*. His poverty was so noted that it passed into a proverb. In this place he is represented as strictly observing the *fast*, not from any religious motive, but because he had nothing to eat.

[2] "Kuster rightly perceived that the Diplë is a species of *dance*—as Hesychius testifies, *διπλῆ· ὀρχήσεως εἶδος ἢ κρούματος*,—and that this is by apposition called *χάριν χορείας*."—*Enger*. So also Fritzsche. This species of dance is also mentioned by Pollux, iv. 105.

and the rocky dells re-echo; while around thee the beautiful leaved ivy flourishes with its tendrils round about.

[*Mnesilochus is brought upon the stage again by the policeman fast bound to the plank.*

Policeman. There now you shall wail to the open sky.

Mnes. O policeman, I beseech you!

Pol. Don't beseech me!

Mnes. Loosen the nail.

Pol. Well, I am doing so. [*Hammers it in tighter.*

Mnes. Ah me, miserable! you are hammering it in the more.

Pol. Do you wish it *to be hammered* still more?

Mnes. Alas, alas! May you perish miserably.

Pol. Be silent, miserable old man! Come, let me bring a mat, in order that I may guard you.

[*Goes out and returns again with a mat.*

Mnes. These are the blessed fruits which I have enjoyed from Euripides. Ha, ye gods, preserver Jove, there are hopes! The man does not seem likely to abandon me; but he ran forth as Perseus,[1] and secretly gave me a sign that I must become Andromeda. At all events I'm furnished with the fetters.[2] Therefore it is still evident that he will come to save me; for *otherwise* he would not have flown near me.

Enter EURIPIDES *as Perseus.*

Eur. Dear, dear virgins, would I could approach and escape the observation of the policeman! (*Addressing the policeman.*) Dost thou hear? O, *I beseech* thee, who dwellest in caves, by reverence, assent, permit me to come to the woman!

Mnes. Pitiless was he, who bound me, the most distressed of mortals. When I had with difficulty escaped the antiquated old woman, I perished notwithstanding. For this policeman has been standing by me this long while as my keeper: has hung me up, undone and friendless, as a dinner for the crows. Do you see? not among dances, nor yet *accompanied* by the

[1] According to Droysen, Euripides flies through the air *a la* Perseus. "Aristophanes is ridiculing the *Andromeda* of Euripides, which was acted at the same time with his Helena." "From this it is understood, that Euripides came on the stage habited as Perseus, and at first personated Perseus, as Mnesilochus did Andromeda; but with great confusion of character."—*Fritzsche.*

[2] *I.e.* the fetters needed for personating Andromeda bound to a rock.

girls [1] of my own age, do I stand with the ballot-box of pebbles, but, entangled in strong fetters, I am exposed as food for the whale Glaucetes.[2] Lament me, O women, not with a bridal song, but with a prison-song, since I have suffered wretched things, wretched man, oh me unhappy, unhappy! and among my other impious sufferings from my relations, supplicating the man, kindling the all-tearful lamentation of death, alas! alas! who first shaved me clean, who clothed me in a saffron-coloured robe; and, in addition to this, sent me up to this temple, where the women *were assembled*. Ah me, thou unrelenting god of my fate! Oh me, accursed! Who at the presence of my woes will not look upon my unenviable suffering? Would that the fire-bearing star of Æther would utterly destroy me, ill-fated man. For no longer is it pleasing to me to behold the immortal flame; since I am hung up, the cut-throat woes of the gods, for a quick journey to the dead.

Eur. (*as Echo*). "Hail, O dear child! but may the gods destroy thy father Cepheus, who exposed thee."

Mnes. (*as Andromeda*). "But who are you, who have pitied my suffering?"

Eur. "Echo, responsive mocker of words, who, last year in this very place, myself even shared in the contest with Euripides. But, child, you must act your own part, to weep piteously."

Mnes. "And you must weep in answer after me."

Eur. "This shall be my care: but commence your words."

[*Goes behind the scene.*

Mnes. "O sacred night, how long a course you pursue, driving over the starry back of sacred Æther through the most august Olympus."

Eur. (*from behind* [3] *the scene as Echo*). "Through Olympus."

Mnes. "Why ever have I, Andromeda, obtained a share of woes above the rest?"

[1] Here Mnes. is "dancing among the girls of his own age;" presently he forgets himself and relapses into the old Athenian "with a ballot-box in hand." Throughout the whole there is a *studied* confusion of persons, genders, and constructions. Aristophanes, like Rabelais, often writes incoherent nonsense designedly.

[2] "A famous glutton mentioned in Pax, 1008."—*Brunck.* "Glaucetes is called a whale by apposition, because he was in the habit of devouring fish like a whale."—*Fritzsche.*

[3] "So also Euripides' Echo had answered from behind the scenes."—*Fritzsche.*

Eur. "Obtained a share."
Mnes. "Wretched for my death."
Eur. "Wretched for my death."
Mnes. "You will destroy me, old woman, with chattering."
Eur. "With chattering."
Mnes. "By Jove, you have got in very troublesome."
Eur. "Very."
Mnes. "Good sir, permit me to sing a monody, and you will oblige me. Cease."
Eur. "Cease."
Mnes. Go to the devil.
Eur. "Go to the devil."
Mnes. What's the pest?
Eur. "What's the pest."
Mnes. You talk foolishly.
Eur. "You talk foolishly."
Mnes. Plague take you.
Eur. "Plague take you."
Mnes. Confound you.
Eur. "Confound you."
Pol. (*awaking and starting up from his mat*). Hollo you, what are you talking?
Eur. "Hollo you, what are you talking?"
Pol. I'll summon the Prytanes.
Eur. "I'll summon the Prytanes."
Pol. What's the pest?
Eur. "What's the pest?"
Pol. Whence was the voice?
Eur. "Whence was the voice?"
Pol. (*turning to Mnesilochus*). Are you talking?
Eur. "Are you talking?"
Pol. You shall weep.
Eur. "You shall weep."
Pol. Are you laughing at me?
Eur. "Are you laughing at me?"
Mnes. (*to the policeman*). No, by Jove! but this woman near you.
Eur. "This near you."

[1] "One may infer from this appellation that Echo was commonly considered a decrepit old woman."—*Fritzsche.*

Pol. Where is the abominable *woman?* Now she's flying. Whither, whither are you flying?

Eur. "Whither, whither are you flying?"

Pol. You shall not get off with impunity.

Eur. "You shall not get off with impunity."

Pol. Why, are you still muttering?

Eur. "Why, are you still muttering?"

Pol. Catch the abominable *woman!*

Eur. "Catch the abominable woman."

Pol. The chattering and accursed woman.

Eur. (*entering as Perseus*). "Ye[1] gods! to what land of barbarians have we come with swift sandals? for I, Perseus, place my winged foot, cutting my way through mid air, travelling to Argos, carrying the head of the Gorgon."

Pol. What are you saying about the head of Gorgus the secretary?

Eur. "I say the *head* of the Gorgon."

Pol. I also mean Gorgus.

Eur. "Ha! what cliff is this which I see, and virgin like to the goddesses, moored like a ship?"

Mnes. "O stranger, pity me all wretched: loose me from my fetters."

Pol. Don't you talk! Accursed for your audacity: do you chatter when about to die?

Eur. "O virgin, I pity you, seeing you hung up."

Pol. It is not a virgin, but a sinful old man, and a thief, and a knave.

Eur. "You talk foolishly, policeman; for this is Andromeda, daughter of Cepheus."

Pol. Look at his breast! Does he look like a woman?

Eur. "Give me here your hand, in order that I may touch the damsel; give me it, policeman: for all men have their weaknesses, and love of this damsel has seized myself."

Pol. I'm not at all jealous of you; but if his face had been turned this way, I would not have refused your going and kissing him.

Eur. "But why, policeman, do you not permit me to release her and recline upon my couch and marriage-bed?"

[1] "The Scholiast informs us that the three first verses are taken from the *Andromeda*, and the rest put together from some other part of that play."—*Enger.*

Pol. If you strongly desire to kiss the old fellow, bore through the plank and go to him.

Eur. "No, by Jove, but I will loosen the fetters."

Pol. Then I'll whip you.

Eur. "And yet I'll do so."

Pol. Then I'll cut off your head with this scimetar.

Eur. "Alas! what shall I do? To what words shall I turn? But his barbarous nature will not give ear to them. For in truth, if you were to offer new inventions of wisdom to stupid people, you would spend your labour to no purpose. But I must apply some other device which is adapted to him."

[*Exit Euripides.*

Pol. Abominable fox! how he was for deceiving me.

Mnes. Remember, Perseus, that you are leaving me miserable.

Pol. What, you're still wishing to get the whip!

[*Lies down again and falls asleep.*

Cho. It is my custom to invite hither to the chorus Pallas, friend of the chorus, virgin, unwedded damsel, who guards our city, and alone possesses visible sovereignty, and is called guardian. Appear, O thou that hatest tyrants, as is fitting! Of a truth the people of the women invokes thee; and mayest thou come to me with Peace the friend of festivals. Come, ye mistresses, benevolent and propitious, to your hallowed place; where in truth it is not lawful for men to behold the solemn orgies of the two goddesses, where, by torch-light, ye show your immortal countenances. Come, approach, we supplicate you, O much-revered Thesmophoræ! If ever before ye came in answer to our call, come now, we beseech you, here to us.

Enter EURIPIDES *as an old procuress, accompanied by a dancing-girl and a boy with a flute.*

Eur. Women, if you are willing to make peace with me for the future, it is now in your power; I make you these proposals of peace on the understanding that you are to be in no wise abused by me at all henceforth.

Cho. On account of what matter do you bring forward this proposal?

Eur. This man in the plank is my father-in-law. If there-

fore I recover him, you shall never be abused at all. But if you do not comply, I will accuse you to your husbands when they come home from the army of those things which you do secretly.

Cho. For our parts, be assured that we are prevailed upon. But this barbarian you must prevail upon yourself.

Eur. That is my business; and yours (*turning to the dancing-girl*), Elaphium, is to remember to do what I told you on the road. In the first place therefore walk past him, and gird yourself up. And do you (*turning to the boy*), Teredon, play an accompaniment to the Persian dance.

Pol. (*waking up*). What's this bumming? What band of revellers awakens me?

Eur. The girl was about to practise beforehand, policeman; for she is going to certain people to dance.

The girl begins to dance, and Euripides, playing his outrageous part, receives a drachma from the policeman, who goes out with her, adjuring the supposed old wretch to guard the old man, Mnesilochus. Euripides has told the policeman his name is Artemisia, and he and his father-in-law fly on being left alone. When the other two return the dancing-girl slips off.

Pol. Ah me, how I am undone! Where is the old man *gone* from hence? O old woman, old woman. I don't commend you, old woman. Artamuxia. The old woman has deceived me. (*Picks up his quiver and throws it across the stage.*) Away with you as soon as possible! It is rightly called quiver, for it imposes upon me. Ah me, what shall I do? Whither is the old woman *gone?* Artamuxia.

Cho. Are you inquiring for the old woman, who was carrying the harp?

Pol. Yes, yes. Did you see her?

Cho. Both she herself has gone this way, and an old man was following her.

Pol. The old man with the saffron-coloured robe?

Cho. Yes; you might still catch her, if you were to pursue her this way.

Pol. Oh the abominable old woman! Which way shall I run? Artamuxia!

Cho. Run straight upwards. Whither are you running? Will you not run back this way? you are running the contrary way.

Pol. Me miserable! But Artamuxia is running off.

[*Exit policeman.*

Cho. Run then, run then, with a fair wind to the Devil! But we have sported sufficiently; so that in truth it is time for each to go home. May the Thesmophoræ return us a gracious kindness for this. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE CLOUDS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

STREPSIADES.
PHEIDIPPIDES.
SERVANT TO STREPSIADES.
DISCIPLES OF SOCRATES.
SOCRATES.
CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

DICÆOLOGOS.
ADICÆOLOGOS.
PASIAS.
AMYNIAS.
WITNESSES.
CHÆREPHON.

SCENE—Athens.

THE CLOUDS

STREPSIADES *is discovered in his chamber,* PHEIDIPPIDES *sleeping in his bed. Time, before break of day.*

Strep. (*stretching and yawning.*) Ah me, ah me! will this night never end?
Oh kingly Jove, shall there be no more day?
And yet the cock sung out long time ago;
I heard him—but my people lie and snore,
Snore in defiance, for the rascals know
It is their privilege in time of war,
Which with its other plagues brings this upon us,
That we mayn't rouse these vermin with a cudgel.
There's my young hopeful too, he sleeps it through,
Snug under five fat blankets at the least.
Would I could sleep so sound! but my poor eyes
Have no sleep in them; what with debts and duns
And stable-keepers' bills, which this fine spark
Heaps on my back, I lie awake the whilst:
And what cares he but to coil up his locks,
Ride, drive his horses, dream of them all night,
Whilst I, poor devil, may go hang—for now
The moon[1] in her last quarter wains apace,
And my usurious creditors are gaping.
What hoa! a[2] light! bring me my tablets, boy!
That I may set down all, and sum them up,
Debts, creditors, and interest upon interest—
[*Boy enters with a light and tablets.*
Let me see where I am and what the total—
Twelve pounds[3] to Pasias—Hah! to Pasias twelve!
Out on it, and for what? A horse forsooth,

[1] The 30th of the month, the term for enforcing payments and taking out execution against debtors, was near.
[2] In the original that species of lamp called by the Greeks *lychnus*.
[3] The Athenian pound was of the value of one hundred drachmæ, and each drachma of six oboli. The pound may be computed at four of ours, which gives the price of the horse about £48.

Right noble by the mark [1]—Curse on such marks!
Would I had giv'n this eye from out this head,
Ere I had paid the purchase of this jennet!

Pheidip. Shame on you,[2] Philo!—Keep within your ring.

Streps. There 'tis! that's it! the bane of all my peace—
He's racing in his sleep.

Pheidip. A heat—a heat!
How many turns to a heat?

Streps. More than enough;
You've giv'n me turns in plenty—I am jaded.
But to my list—What name stands next to Pasias?
Amynias—three good pounds—still for the race—
A chariot mounted on its wheels complete.

Pheidip. Dismount! unharness and away!

Streps. I thank you;
You have unharness'd me: I am dismounted,
And with a vengeance—All my goods in pawn,
Fines, forfeiture, and penalties in plenty.

Pheidip. (*wakes*). My father! why so restless? who has vex'd you?

Streps. The sheriff vexes me; he breaks my rest.

Pheidip. Peace, self-tormentor, let me sleep!

Streps. Sleep on!
But take this with you; all these debts of mine
Will double on your head: a plague confound
That cursed match-maker, who drew me in
To wed, forsooth, that precious dam of thine.
I liv'd at ease in the country, coarsely clad,
Rough, free, and full withal as oil and honey
And store of stock could fill me, till I took,
Clown as I was, this limb of the Alcmæons,[3]
This vain, extravagant, high-blooded dame:
Rare bed-fellows and dainty—were we not?
I, smelling of the wine-vat, figs and fleeces,
The produce of my farm, all essence she,
Saffron and harlot's kisses, paint and washes,

[1] See the *Knights* for an account of some of the marks usually stamped upon Grecian horses. To the Koppa and Samphor, there mentioned, may be added the Bucephalus, or the horse which had the mark of an ox's head.

[2] Philon, Phœnix, Corax, etc., were Grecian appellations for horses; substitutes for our Highflyer, Diamond, etc.

[3] The Alcmæonidæ were one of the first families in Athens.

A pamper'd wanton—Idle I'll not call her;
She took due pains in faith to work my ruin,
Which made me tell her, pointing to this cloak,
Now threadbare on my shoulders—see, goodwife,
This is your work—in troth you toil too hard.
[*Boy re-enters.*

Boy. Master, the lamp has drunk up all its oil.

Streps. Aye, 'tis a drunken lamp; the more fault yours;
Whelp, you shall howl for this.

Boy. Why? for what fault?

Streps. For cramming such a greedy wick with oil. [*Exit boy.*
Well! in good time this hopeful heir was born;
Then I and my beloved fell to wrangling
About the naming of the brat—My wife
Would dub her colt Xanthippus or Charippus,
Or it might be Callipides, she car'd not
So 'twere [1] equestrian the name—but I
Stuck for his grandfather Pheidonides;
At last when neither could prevail, the matter
Was compromis'd by calling him Pheidippides:
Then she began to fondle her sweet babe,
And taking him by th' hand—Lambkin, she cried,
When thou art some years older thou shalt drive,
Megacles-like, thy chariot to the city,
Rob'd in a saffron mantle—No, quoth I,
Not so, my boy, but thou shalt drive thy goats,
When thou art able, from the fields of Phelle,[2]
Clad in a woollen jacket like thy father:
But he is deaf to all these frugal rules,
And drives me on the gallop to my ruin;
Therefore all night I call my thoughts to council,
And after long debate find one chance left,
To which if I can lead him, all is safe,
If not—but soft: 'tis time that I should wake him.
But how to soothe him to the task—(*speaking in a soft gentle tone*) Pheidippides!

[1] Names ending in *ippos* or *ippides* among the Greeks showed a connection with equestrian rank; hence the lady's partiality for the terms Xanthippus, Charippus, etc. The name Pheidonides, which Strepsiades contends for, is derived from a Greek word implying a *man addicted to parsimony;* the compromise therefore for Pheidippides is so contrived as to suit both parties.

[2] A rocky district of Attica, which afforded pasturage only to goats.

Precious Pheidippides!
Pheidip. What now, my father?
Streps. Kiss me, my boy! reach me thine hand—
Pheidip. Declare,
What would you?
Streps. Dost thou love me, sirrah? speak!
Pheidip. Aye, by [1] equestrian Neptune!
Streps. (*angrily*). Name not him,
Name not that charioteer; he is my bane,
The source of all my sorrow—but, my son,
If thou dost love me, prove it by obedience.
Pheidip. In what must I obey?
Streps. Reform your habits;
Quit them at once, and what I shall prescribe
That do!
Pheidip. And what is it that you prescribe?
Streps. But wilt thou do't?
Pheidip. Yea, by Dionysus!
Streps. 'Tis well: get up! come hither, boy! look out!
Yon little wicket and the hut hard by—
Dost see them?
Pheidip. Clearly. What of that same hut?
Streps. Why that's the council-chamber of all wisdom:
There the choice spirits dwell, who teach the world
That heav'n's great concave is one mighty oven,
And men its burning embers; these are they,
Who can show pleaders how to twist a cause,
So you'll but pay them for it, right or wrong.
Pheidip. And how do you call them?
Streps. Troth, I know not that,
But they are men, who take a world of pains;
Wondrous good men and able.
Pheidip. Out upon 'em!
Poor rogues, I know them now; you mean those scabs,
Those squalid, barefoot, beggarly impostors,
The mighty cacodæmons of whose sect
Are Socrates and [2] Chærephon. Away!

[1] Besides those appellations, which, according to Pausanias, were assigned to Neptune by the poets for the sake of adorning their verses, every city had some particular denomination for him. All, however, agreed in calling him by one common appellation, the Equestrian.

[2] Chærephon is described by Plato (in *Charmide*, p. 235, in *Apol.* p. 360) as a man whose warmth of temper had something of insanity in it.

Streps. Hush, hush! be still; don't vent such foolish prattle;
But if you'll take my counsel, join their college
And quit your riding-school.
Pheidip. Not I, so help me
Dionysus our patron! though you brib'd me
With all the racers that Leogaras
Breeds from his Phasian stud.
Streps. Dear, darling lad,
Prythee be rul'd, and learn.
Pheidip. What shall I learn?
Streps. They have a choice of logic; this for justice,
That for injustice: learn that latter art,
And all these creditors, that now beset me,
Shall never touch a drachma that I owe them.
Pheidip. I'll learn of no such masters, nor be made
A scare-crow and a may-game to my comrades;
I have no zeal for starving.
Streps. No, nor I
For feasting you and your fine pamper'd cattle
At free cost any longer—Horse and foot
To the crows I bequeath you. So be gone!
Pheidip. Well, sir, I have an uncle rich and noble;
Megacles will not let me be unhors'd;
To him I go; I'll trouble you no longer. [*Exit.*
Streps. (*alone*). He has thrown me to the ground, but I'll not lie there;
I'll up, and, with permission of the gods,
Try if I cannot learn these arts myself:
But being old, sluggish, and dull of wit,
How am I sure these subtleties won't pose me?
Well! I'll attempt it: what avails complaint?
Why don't I knock and enter?—Hoa! within there!—
[*Knocks violently at the door.*
Disciple (*half-opening the door*).[1] Go, hang yourself! and give the crows a dinner—
What noisy fellow art thou at the door?
Streps. Strepsiades of Cicynna,[2] son of Pheidon.

[1] The scene changes to the humble mansion of Socrates.

[2] Cicynna was one of the wards of the Acamantian tribe. Why it is here selected as the ward of Strepsiades the Scholiast does not mention; but it was most probably in conformity with that species of humour, such as it is, of which the Grecian dramatist was not less fond than Boccaccio or Rabelais.

Disciple. Whoe'er thou art, 'fore Heaven, thou art a fool
Not to respect these doors; battering so loud,
And kicking with such vengeance, you have marr'd
The ripe conception of my pregnant brain,
And brought on a miscarriage.
Streps. Oh! the pity!—
Pardon my ignorance: I'm country bred
And far a-field am come: I pray you tell me
What curious thought my luckless din has strangled,
Just as your brain was hatching.
Disciple. These are things
We never speak of but amongst ourselves.
Streps. Speak boldly then to me, for I am come
To be amongst you, and partake the secrets
Of your profound academy.
Disciple. Enough!
I will impart, but set it down in thought
Amongst our mysteries—This is the question,
As it was put but now to Chærephon,
By our great master Socrates, to answer—
How many of his own lengths at one spring
A flea can hop—for we did see one vault
From Chærephon's black eye-brow to the head
Of the philosopher.
Streps. And how did t'other
Contrive to measure this?
Disciple. Most accurately:
He dipt the insect's feet in melted wax,
Which, hard'ning into sandals as it cool'd,
Gave him the space by rule infallible.
Streps. Imperial Jove! what subtilty of thought!
Disciple. But there's a deeper question yet behind;
What would you say to that?
Streps. I pray, impart it.
Disciple. 'Twas put to Socrates, if he could say,
When a gnat humm'd, whether the sound did issue
From mouth or tail.
Streps. Aye; marry, what said he?
Disciple. He said your gnat doth blow his trumpet backwards
From a sonorous cavity within him,
Which being filled with breath, and forc'd along

The narrow pipe or rectum of his body,
Doth vent itself in a loud hum behind.
Streps. Hah! then I see the podex of your gnat
Is trumpet-fashion'd—Oh! the blessings on him
For this discovery; well may he escape
The law's strict scrutiny, who thus develops
The anatomy of a gnat.
Disciple. Nor is this all;
Another grand experiment was blasted
By a curst cat.
Streps. As how, good sir; discuss?
Disciple. One night as he was gazing at the moon,
Curious and all intent upon her motions,
A cat on the house ridge was at her needs,
And squirted in his face.
Streps. Beshrew her for it!
Yet I must laugh no less to think a cat
Should so bespatter Socrates.
Disciple. Last night
We were bilk'd of our supper.
Streps. Were you so?
What did your master substitute instead?
Disciple. Why to say truth, he sprinkled a few ashes
Upon the board, then with a little broach,
Crook'd for the nonce, pretending to describe
A circle, neatly filch'd away a cloak.
Streps. Why talk we then of Thales? Open to me,
Open the school, and let me see your master:
I am on fire to enter—Come, unbar!

[*The door of the school is unbarred. The Socratic scholars are seen in various grotesque situations and positions. Strepsiades, with signs of astonishment, draws back a pace or two, then exclaims:*

O Hercules, defend me! who are these?
What kind of cattle have we here in view?
Disciple. Where is the wonder? What do they resemble?
Streps. Methinks they're like our Spartan prisoners,
Captur'd at Pylos. What are they in search of?
Why are their eyes so riveted to th' earth?
Disciple. There their researches centre.
Streps. 'Tis for onions

They are in quest—Come, lads, give o'er your search;
I'll show you what you want, a noble plat,
All round and sound—but soft! what mean those gentry,
Who dip their heads so low?

Disciple. Marry, because
Their studies lead that way: They are now diving
To the dark realms of Tartarus and Night.

Streps. But why are all their cruppers mounted up?

Disciple. To practise them in star-gazing, and teach them
Their proper elevations—but no more:
In, fellow-students, in: if chance the master come
And find us here—

[*addressing himself to some of his fellow-students, who were crowding about the new-comer.*

Streps. Nay, prythee let 'em stay,
And be of council with me in my business.

Disciple. Impossible; they cannot give the time.

Streps. Now for the love of Heav'n, what have we here?
Explain their uses to me. [*observing the apparatus.*[1]

Disciple. This machine
Is for astronomy—

Streps. And this?

Disciple. For geometry.

Streps. As how?

Disciple. For measuring the earth.

Streps. Indeed!
What, by the lot? [2]

Disciple. No, faith, sir, by the lump;
Ev'n the whole globe at once.

Streps. Well said, in troth.
A quaint device, and made for general use.[3]

[1] The seventh chapter in the fourth book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* seems to have been framed for the purpose of meeting the ridicule thrown upon the astronomical and geometrical pursuits of Socrates. Xenophon never mentions the name of Aristophanes, but many passages in his works show that the *Clouds* of that poet were never out of his mind. His allusions to the play are always made with the utmost good humour.

[2] Since the restoration of the democracy of Pericles, conquered land had been commonly divided among the poorer citizens, the division being made by lot.

[3] This is not quite correct translation, nor does it sufficiently express the sly hit of the original at the inordinate greediness of the Athenians which grasped at the possession of the whole globe. The best comment upon the passage is the description which Plutarch gives of the employment of the

Disciple. Look now, this line marks the circumference
Of the whole earth, d'ye see—This spot is Athens—
Streps. Athens! got to, I see no courts are sitting;
Therefore I can't believe you.
Disciple. Nay, in truth,
This very tract is Attica.
Streps. And where,
Where is my own Cicynna?
Disciple. Here it lies:
And here's Eubœa [1]—Mark! how far it runs—
Streps. How far it runs! Yes, Pericles has made it
Run far enough from us—Where's Lacedæmon?
Disciple. Here; close to Athens.
Streps. Ah! how much too close—
Prythee, good friends, take that bad neighbour from us.
Disciple. That's not for us to do.
Streps. The worse luck your's!
But look! (*casting up his eyes*) who's this suspended in a basket? [*Socrates is discovered.*
Disciple (*with solemnity*). HIMSELF. The HE.
Streps. The HE? what HE?
Disciple. Why, Socrates.
Streps. Hah! Socrates!—(*to the scholar*) Make up to him and roar,
Bid him come down! roar lustily.
Disciple. Not I:
Do it yourself; I've other things to mind. [*Exit.*
Streps. Hoa! Socrates—What hoa, my little Socrates!
Socr. Mortal, how now! Thou insect of a day,
What would'st thou?

Athenians, preparatory to the invasion of Sicily; when, as the entertaining biographer tells us, the sole employment of the youth in their places of exercise, and of the elderly men in the shops and places where they met for conversation, consisted in drawing maps of Sicily, in talking of the nature and quality of the sea that surrounded it, and in describing its havens and that part of the coast which was opposite to Attica.

[1] The translation falsifies the historical fact here (see Thucyd. l. i. p. 114); he has missed a play of words, which is of little consequence, and lost a trait of national character, which is always of consequence. The word, which the Socratic scholar applies to the geometrical extension of Eubœa, Strepsiades applies to the extension of tribute imposed upon that island by Pericles after his chastisement of it for embracing the Peloponnesian party. Strepsiades unites the democratical and imperial We with Pericles, as the efficient causes of this extension of tribute.

Streps. I would know what thou art doing.
Socr. I tread in air, contemplating the sun.
Streps. Ah! then I see you're basketed so high,
That you look down upon the Gods—Good hope,
You'll lower a peg on earth.
Socr. Sublime in air,
Sublime in thought I carry my mind with me,
Its cogitations all assimilated
To the pure atmosphere, in which I float;
Lower me to earth, and my mind's subtle powers,
Seiz'd by contagious dullness, lose their spirit;
For the dry earth drinks up the generous sap,
The vegetating vigour of philosophy,
And leaves it a mere husk.
Streps. What do you say?
Philosophy has sapt your vigour? Fie upon it.
But come, my precious fellow, come down quickly,
And teach me those fine things I'm here in quest of.
Socr. And what fine things are they?
Streps. A new receipt
For sending off my creditors, and foiling them
By the art logical; for you shall know
By debts, pawns, pledges, usuries, executions,
I am rackt and rent in tatters.
Socr. Why permit it?
What strange infatuation seiz'd your senses?
Streps. The horse-consumption, a devouring plague;
But so you'll enter me amongst your scholars,
And tutor me like them to bilk my creditors,
Name your own price, and by the Gods I swear
I'll pay you the last drachm.
Socr. By what Gods?
Answer that first; for your Gods are not mine.
Streps. How swear you then? As the Byzantians swear
By their base iron [1] coin?
Socr. Art thou ambitious
To be instructed in celestial matters,
And taught to know them clearly?

[1] The answer of Strepsiades will be made more intelligible by observing that the former speech of Socrates would have been rendered more correctly by translating "Gods are not current coin with me."

Streps. Aye, aye, in faith,
So they be to my purpose, and celestial.
Socr. What, if I bring you to a conference
With my own proper Goddesses, the Clouds?
Streps. 'Tis what I wish devoutly.
Socr. Come, sit down;
Repose yourself upon this couch.[1]
Streps. 'Tis done.
Socr. Now take this chaplet—wear it.
Streps. Why this chaplet?
Would'st make of me another Athamas,[2]
And sacrifice me to a cloud?
Socr. Fear nothing;
It is a ceremony indispensable
At OUR initiations.
Streps. What to gain?
Socr. (*instead of the sacred meat, which was thrown on the sacrificed victim, a basket of stones is showered on the head of Strepsiades*).
'Twill sift your faculties as fine as powder,
Bolt 'em like meal, grind 'em as light as dust;
Only be patient.
Streps. Truly, you'll go near
To make your words good; an' you pound me thus,
You'll make me very dust and nothing else.
Socr. (*assuming all the magical solemnity and tone of voice of an adept*). Keep silence, then, and listen to a prayer,
Which fits the gravity of age to hear—
Oh! Air, all powerful Air, which dost enfold
This pendant globe, thou vault of flaming gold.
Ye sacred Clouds, who bid the thunder roll,

[1] Here commences, with the omission of the very important epithet "sacred" attached to the "couch" of the original, an almost entire neglect by Mr. Cumberland of a very singular part of the Socratic character, which grew out of his early attachment to the occult sciences, so much in vogue among the Greek philosophers. When we find both Plato and Aristophanes agree in attaching a considerable degree of mysticism to this singular person, we may be sure that there were some grounds for such a proceeding. In the original, this part of the Socratic character is generally announced by a change of metre.

[2] The poet plays upon a tragedy of Sophocles, then current in everybody's mouth; the story of which had been taken out of the fabulous and romantic history of this old Bœotian prince. In the play Athamas is to be sacrificed to the gods, and, like other victims, he is led to the altar with a chaplet on his head.

Shine forth, approach, and cheer your suppliant's soul!
Streps. Hold, keep 'em off awhile, till I am ready.
Ah! luckless me, wou'd I had brought my bonnet,
And so escap'd a soaking.
Socr. Come, come away!
Fly swift, ye Clouds, and give yourselves to view!
Whether on high Olympus' sacred top
Snow-crown'd ye sit, or in the azure vales
Of your own father Ocean sporting weave
Your misty dance, or dip your golden urns
In the seven mouths of Nile; whether ye dwell
On Thracian Mimas, or Mœotis' lake,
Hear me, yet hear, and thus invok'd approach!

[*Chorus of Clouds.* (*The scene is at the remotest part of the stage. Thunder is heard. A large and shapeless Cloud is seen floating in the air; from which the following song is heard.*)

Ascend, ye watery Clouds, on high,
Daughters of Ocean, climb the sky,
And o'er the mountain's pine-capt brow
Towering your fleecy mantle throw:
Thence let us scan the wide-stretch'd scene,
Groves, lawns, and rilling streams between,
And stormy Neptune's vast expanse,
And grasp all nature at a glance.
Now the dark tempest flits away,
And lo! the glittering orb of day
Darts from his clear ethereal beam,
Come let us snatch the joyous gleam.
Scor. Yes, ye Divinities, whom I adore,
I hail you now propitious to my prayer.
Didst thou not hear them speak in thunder to me?
Streps. (*kneeling, and, with various acts of buffoonery, affecting terror and embarrassment.*)
And I too am your Cloudships' most obedient,
And under sufferance trump against your thunder:—
Nay (*turning to Socrates*), take it how you may, my frights and fears
Have pinch'd and cholic'd my poor bowels so,
That I can't choose but treat their holy nostrils
With an unsavoury sacrifice,

Socr. Forbear
These gross scurrilities, for low buffoons [1]
And mountebanks more fitting. Hush! be still,
List to the chorus of their heavenly voices,
For music is the language they delight in.
Chorus of Clouds (*approaching nearer*). Ye Clouds replete with fruitful showers,
Here let us seek Minerva's towers,
The cradle of old Cecrops' race,
The world's chief ornament and grace;
Here mystic fanes and rites [2] divine
And lamps in sacred splendour shine;
Here the Gods dwell in marble domes,
Feasted with costly hecatombs,
That round their votive statues blaze,
Whilst crowded temples ring with praise;
And pompous sacrifices here
Make holidays throughout the year,
And when gay spring-time comes again,
Bromius convokes his sportive train,
And pipe and song and choral dance [3]
Hail the soft hours as they advance.
Streps. Now, in the name of Jove, I pray thee tell me
Who are these ranting dames, that talk in stilts?
Of the Amazonian cast no doubt.
Socr. Not so,
No dames, but clouds celestial, friendly powers
To men of sluggish parts; from these we draw
Sense, apprehension, volubility,
Wit to confute, and cunning to ensnare.
Streps. Aye, therefore 'twas that my heart leapt within me
For very sympathy when first I heard 'em:
Now I could prattle shrewdly of first causes,
And spin out metaphysic cobwebs finely,

[1] In the original, *comic writers*. Aristophanes borrows the contemptuous language, in which the philosophers were accustomed to speak of the writers for the stage, whose influence with the people they beheld with the utmost indignation. The orator Isocrates, in his Nicocles, taunts the Athenians with their preference of these buffoons to such moral writers as Hesiod, Theognis, Chocylidis, etc.

[2] The Eleusinian Mysteries.

[3] The original applies more to the songs than the dances of the choruses; the whole is applicable to the spring-festival, when plays were exhibited.

And dogmatise most rarely, and dispute
And paradox it with the best of you:
So, come what may, I must and will behold 'em;
Show me their faces, I conjure you.

Socr. Look,
Look towards Mount Parnes[1] as I point—There, there!
Now they descend the hill; I see them plainly,
As plain as can be.

Streps. Where, where? I prythee, show me.

Socr. Here! a whole troop of them thro' woods and hollows,
A byway of their own.

Streps. What ails my eyes,
That I can't catch a glimpse of them?

Socr. Behold!
Here at the very entrance—

Streps. Never trust me,
If yet I see them clearly.

Socr. Then you must be
Sand-blind or worse.

Streps. Nay, now by father Jove,
I cannot choose but see them—precious creatures!
For in good faith here's plenty and to spare.
[*Chorus of Clouds enter.*

Socr. And didst thou doubt if they were goddesses?

Streps. Not I, so help me! only I'd a notion
That they were fog, and dew, and dusky vapour.

Socr. For shame! Why, man, these are the nursing mothers
Of all our famous sophists, fortune-tellers,
Quacks, med'cine-mongers, bards bombastical,
Chorus projectors, and star interpreters,
And wonder-making cheats—The gang of idlers,
Who pay them for their feeding with good store
Of flattery and mouth-worship.

Streps. Now I see
Whom we may thank for driving them along
At such a furious dithyrambic rate,
Sun-shadowing clouds of many-colour'd hues,
Air-rending tempests, hundred-headed Typhons;
Now rousing, rattling them about our ears,
Now gently wafting them adown the sky,

[1] One of the mountains in the neighbourhood of Athens.

Moist, airy, bending, bursting into showers;
For all which fine descriptions these poor knaves
Dine daintily on scraps.
Socr. And proper fare;
What better do they merit?
Streps. Under favour,
If these be clouds (d'you mark me?) very clouds,
How came they metamorphos'd into women?
Clouds are not such as these.
Socr. And what else are they?
Streps. Troth, I can't rightly tell, but I should guess
Something like flakes of wool, not women, sure;
And look! these dames have noses.[1]—
Socr. Hark you, friend,
I'll put a question to you.
Streps. Out with it!
Be quick: let's have it.
Socr. This it is, in short—
Hast thou ne'er seen a cloud,[2] which thou could'st fancy
Shap'd like a centaur, leopard, wolf, or bull?
Streps. Yea, marry, have I, and what then?
Socr. Why then
Clouds can assume what shapes they will, believe me;
For instance; should they spy some hairy clown
Rugged and rough, and like the unlick't cub [3]
Of Xenophantes, straight they turn to centaurs,
And kick at him for vengeance.
Streps. Well done, Clouds!
But should they spy that peculating knave,
Simon,[4] that public thief, how would they treat him?

[1] Wieland explains this as a joke upon the persons composing the Chorus. Their masks, *provided with large noses*, would have a monstrous appearance to a close spectator; while, to a distant one, they would be in exact proportion. A laughable description of the enormous proportions of the tragic actors is given by Lucian in his treatise on dancing.

[2] Whatever region Aristophanes inhabits for the time, whether the earth, the air, or the regions below, he generally contrives to elicit a species of humour, peculiarly appropriate to the situation. The metaphysical wit, in the present scene, besides its ingenuity, appears to have a perfect local propriety.

[3] Hieronymus, the dithyrambic poet, son of Xenophantes, is here aimed at.

[4] Simon the sophist is satirised also by Eupolis for his great and notorious public frauds.

Socr. As wolves—in character most like his own.
Streps. Aye, there it is now; when they saw Cleonymus,
That dastard runaway, they turn'd to hinds
In honour of his cowardice.
Socr. And now,
Having seen Cleisthenes,[1] to mock his lewdness
They change themselves to women.
Streps. Welcome, ladies!
Imperial ladies, welcome! An' it please
Your Highnesses so far to grace a mortal,
Give me a touch of your celestial voices.
Chor. Hail, grandsire! who at this late hour of life
Would'st go to school for cunning; and all hail,
Thou prince pontifical of quirks and quibbles,
Speak thy full mind, make known thy wants and wishes!
Thee and our worthy Prodicus excepted,
Not one of all your sophists[2] have our ear:
Him for his wit and learning we esteem,
Thee[3] for thy proud deportment and high looks,
In barefoot beggary strutting up and down,
Content to suffer mockery for our sake,
And carry a grave face whilst others laugh.
Streps. Oh! mother earth, was ever voice like this,
So reverend, so portentous, so divine!
Socr. These are your only deities, all else
I flout at.
Streps. Hold! Olympian Jupiter—
Is he no god?
Socr. What Jupiter? what god?
Prythee no more—away with him at once!
Streps. Say'st thou? who gives us rain? answer me that.
Socr. These give us rain; as I will straight demonstrate:
Come on now—When did you e'er see it rain

[1] Cleisthenes was a character so contemptibly effeminate, and vicious withal, that the impurity of his manners became proverbial. The reader will find admirable use made of him in the comedy of the Thesmophoriazusæ, or the Festival of Ceres held by women.

[2] Meteorosophist in the original: the distinction is worth observing, because of some allusions made to it by Plato.

[3] These verses marked out to the spectators (many of them, it must be remembered, strangers from various parts of Greece) the person, whom, perhaps without knowing his name, they had seen about the streets and public places of Athens.

Without a cloud? If Jupiter gives rain,
Let him rain down his favours in the sunshine,
Nor ask the clouds to help him.
Streps. You have hit it,
'Tis so; heav'n help me! I did think till now,
When 'twas his godship's pleasure, he made water
Into a sieve and gave the earth a shower.
But, hark'ye me, who thunders? tell me that;
For then it is I tremble.
Socr. These, these thunder,
When they are tumbled.
Streps. How, blasphemer, how?
Socr. When they are charg'd with vapours full to th' bursting,
And bandied to and fro against each other,
Then with the shock they burst and crack amain.
Streps. And who is he that jowls them thus together
But Jove himself?
Socr. Jove! 'tis not Jove that does it,
But the ætherial vortex.
Streps. What is he?
I never heard of him; is he not Jove?
Or is Jove put aside, and Vortex crown'd
King of Olympus in his state and place?
But let me learn some more of this same thunder.
Socr. Have you not learnt? I told you how the clouds,
Being surcharg'd with vapour, rush together,
And, in the conflict, shake the poles with thunder.
Streps. But who believes you?
Socr. You, as I shall prove it:
Mark the Panathenæa, where you cram
Your belly full of pottage; if you shake
And stir it lustily about—what then?
Streps. Marry, why then it gives a desperate crack;
It bounces like a thunderbolt, the pottage
Keeps such a coil within me—At the first,
Pappax it cries—anon with double force,
Papappax!—when at length *Papappapax*
From forth my sounding entrails thund'ring bursts.
Socr. Think then, if so your belly trumpets forth,
How must the vasty vault of heaven resound,
When the clouds crack with thunder!

Streps. Let that pass,
And tell me of the lightning, whose quick flash
Burns us to cinders; that, at least, great Jove
Keeps in reserve to launch at perjury?
Socr. Dunce, dotard! were you born before the flood
To talk of perjury, whilst Simon breathes,
Theorus and Cleonymus, whilst they,
Thrice-perjur'd villains, brave the lightning's stroke,
And gaze the heav'ns unscorcht? Would these escape?
Why, man, Jove's random fires strike his own fane,
Strike Sunium's guiltless top, strike the dumb oak,
Who never yet broke faith or falsely swore.
Streps. It may be so, good sooth! You talk this well:
But I would fain be taught the natural cause
Of these appearances.
Socr. Mark when the winds,
In their free courses check'd, are pent and purs'd
As 'twere within a bladder, stretching then
And struggling for expansion, they burst forth
With crack so fierce as sets the air on fire.
Streps. The devil they do! why now the murder's out:
So was I serv'd with a damn'd paunch, I broil'd
On Jove's day last, just such a scurvy trick;
Because, forsooth, not dreaming of your thunder,
I never thought to give the rascal vent,
Bounce! goes the bag, and covers me all over
With filth and ordure till my eyes struck fire,
Chor. The envy of all Athens shalt thou be,
Happy old man, who from our lips dost suck
Into thy ears true wisdom, so thou art
But wise to learn, and studious to retain
What thou hast learnt; patient to bear the blows
And buffets of hard fortune; to persist,
Doing or suffering; firmly to abide
Hunger and cold, not craving where to dine,
To drink, to sport and trifle time away;
But holding that for best, which best becomes
A man who means to carry all things through
Neatly, expertly, perfect at all points
With head, hands, tongue, to force his way to fortune.
Streps. Be confident; I give myself for one

Of a tough heart, watchful as care can make me,
A frugal, pinching fellow, that can sup
Upon a sprig of savory and to bed;
I am your man for this, hard as an anvil.
Socr. 'Tis well, so you will ratify your faith
In these our deities—CHAOS and CLOUDS
And SPEECH—to these and only these adhere.
Streps. If from this hour henceforth I ever waste
A single thought on any other gods,
Or give them sacrifice, libation, incense,
Nay, even common courtesy, renounce me.
Chor. Speak your wish boldly then, so shall you prosper
As you obey and worship us, and study
The wholesome art of thriving.
Streps. Gracious ladies,
I ask no mighty favour, simply this—
Let me but distance every tongue in Greece,
And run 'em out of sight a hundred lengths.
Chor. Is that all? there we are your friends to serve you;
We will endow thee with such powers of speech,
As henceforth not a demagogue in Athens
Shall spout such popular harangues as thou shalt.
Streps. A fig for powers of spouting! give me powers
Of nonsuiting my creditors.
Chor. A trifle—
Granted as soon as ask'd; only be bold,
And show yourself obedient to your teachers.
Streps. With your help so I will, being undone,
Stript of my pelf by these high-blooded cattle,
And a fine dame, the torment of my life.
Now let them work their wicked will upon me;
They're welcome to my carcass; let 'em claw it,
Starve it with thirst and hunger, fry it, freeze it,
Nay, flay the very skin off; 'tis their own;
So that I may but fob my creditors,
Let the world talk; I care not though it call me
A bold-faced, loud-tongued, overbearing bully;
A shameless, vile, prevaricating cheat;
A tricking, quibbling, double-dealing knave;
A prating, pettyfogging limb o' th' law;
A sly old fox, a perjurer, a hang-dog,

A raggamuffin made of shreds and patches,
The leavings of a dunghill—Let 'em rail,
Yea, marry, let 'em turn my guts to fiddle-strings,
May my bread be my poison! if I care.
Chor. This fellow hath a prompt and daring spirit—
Come hither, sir; do you perceive and feel
What great and glorious fame you shall acquire
By this our schooling of you?
Streps. What, I pray you!
Chor. What but to live the envy of mankind
Under our patronage?
Streps. When shall I see
Those halcyon days?
Chor. Then shall your doors be throng'd
With clients waiting for your coming forth,
All eager to consult you, pressing all
To catch a word from you, with abstracts, briefs,
And cases ready-drawn for your opinion.
But come, begin and lecture this old fellow;
Sift him, that we may see what meal he's made of.
Socr. Hark ye, let's hear what principles you hold,
That these being known, I may apply such tools
As tally with your stuff.
Streps. Tools! by the gods;
Are you about to spring a mine upon me?
Socr. Not so, but simply in the way of practice
To try your memory.
Streps. Oh! as for that,
My memory is of two sorts, long and short:
With them who owe me aught, it never fails;
My creditors indeed complain of it,
As mainly apt to leak and lose its reck'ning.
Socr. But let us hear if nature hath endow'd you
With any grace of speaking.
Streps. None of speaking.
But a most apt propensity to cheating.
Socr. If this be all, how can you hope to learn?
Streps. Fear me not, never break your head for that.
Socr. Well then be quick, and when I speak of things
Mysterious and profound, see that you make
No boggling, but—

Streps. I understand your meaning;
You'd have me bolt philosophy by mouthfuls,
Just like a hungry cur.
Socr. Oh! brutal, gross
And barbarous ignorance! I must suspect,
Old as thou art, thou must be taught with stripes:
Tell me now, when thou art beaten, what dost feel?
Streps. The blows of him that beats me I do feel;
But having breath'd awhile I lay my action
And cite my witnesses; anon more cool,
I bring my cause into the court, and sue
For damages.
Socr. Strip off your cloak! prepare.
Streps. Prepare for what? what crime have I committed?
Socr. None; but the rule and custom is with us,
That all shall enter naked.
Streps. And why naked?
I come with no search-warrant; fear me not;
I'll carry nought away with me.
Socr. No matter;
Conform yourself, and strip.[1]
Streps. And if I do,
Tell me for my encouragement to which
Of all your scholars will you liken me.
Socr. You shall be call'd a second Chærephon.
Streps. Ah! Chærephon is but another name
For a dead [2] corpse—excuse me.
Socr. No more words:
Pluck up your courage; answer not, but follow:
Haste and be perfected.
Streps. Give me my dole [3]

[1] The poet, who seems to hold all the superstitious ceremonies of the heathen religion in contempt, makes Socrates insist upon Strepsiades stripping himself naked before he can be admitted of his school, because such was the practice with those who were initiated into the *Sacred Mysteries*. The clown, who does not see the drift of this injunction, excuses himself from obeying it by saying he does not come like those who are sent upon the search for stolen goods, and who by law were obliged to enter all such houses naked, and so to go out of them, that their warrant might not be made a pretence for plundering the owners.

[2] Aristophanes generally makes himself merry with the paleness and meagre body of this pupil of Socrates.

[3] In the ceremonials of Trophonius' cave, honey-cake was an indispensable oblation to the prophetic dragon under ground.

Of honey-cake in hand, and pass me on;
Ne'er trust me if I do not quake and tremble
As if the cavern of Trophonius yawn'd,
And I were stepping in.

Socr. What ails you? enter!
Why do you halt and loiter at the door?

[*Socrates and Strepsiades enter the mansion of the former.*

Chor. Go, brave adventurer, proceed!
May fortune crown the gallant deed;
Tho' far advanc'd in life's last stage,
Spurning the infirmities of age,
Thou canst to youthful labours rise,
And boldly struggle to be wise.

Ye, who are here spectators of our scene,
Give me your patience to a few plain words,
And by my patron Bacchus, whose I am,
I swear they shall be true ones—Gentle friends,
So may I prosper in your fair esteem,
As I declare in truth that I was mov'd
To tender you my former comedy,
As deeming it the best of all my works,
And you its judges worthy of that work,
Which I had wrought with my best care and pains:
But fools were found to thrust me from the stage,
And you, whose better wisdom should have sav'd me
From that most vile cabal, permitted it;
For which I needs must chide, yet not so sharply
As to break off from such approv'd good friends:
No, you have been my patrons from all time,
Ev'n to my first-born issue: when I dropt
My bantling at your door to hide the shame
Of one, who call'd herself a maiden muse,
You charitably took the foundling in,
And gave it worthy training. Now, behold,
This sister comedy,[1] Electra-like,
Comes on the search if she perchance may find
Some recognition of a brother lost,

[1] It is almost unnecessary to mention, that an allusion is here made to the *Choephoræ* of Æschylus, where Electra recognises a lock of hair, found on her father's grave, to be the hair of her brother.

Though but a relic of his well-known hair.
Seemly and modest she appears before you;
Not like our stage buffoons in shaggy hide
To set a mob a roaring; she will vent
No foolish jests at baldness,[1] will not dance
Th' indecent cordax; we have no old man
Arm'd with a staff to practise manual jokes
On the by-standers' ribs, and keep the ring
For them who dance the chorus: you shall see
No howling furies[2] burst upon the stage
Waving their torches; other weapons
Than the muse gives us we shall not employ,
Nor let *ah me, ah me!*[3] sigh in your ears.
Yet not of this I boast, nor that I scorn
To cater for your palates out of scraps
At second or third hand, but fresh and fair
And still original, as one, who knows,
When he has done a good deed, where to stop;
And, having levell'd Cleon to the ground,
Not to insult his carcass, like to those
Who, having once run down Hyperbolus,
Poor devil! mouth and mangle without mercy
Him and his mother too; foremost of these
Was Eupolis, who pilfer'd from my muse,
And pass'd it for his own with a new name,[4]
Guilty the more for having dash'd his theft
With the obscene device of an old hag
Dancing the drunken cordax in her cups,
Like her Phrynichus feign'd to be devour'd
By the sea-monster—Shame upon such scenes!
Hermippus next *Hyperbolis'd* amain,
And now the whole pack open in full cry,

[1] This is a retort upon Eupolis, who had taken occasion to ridicule Aristophanes for so poor a reason as his being bald-headed.

[2] Æschylus was mulct in a heavy fine for introducing his chorus of furies armed with fiery torches.

[3] He says (glancing at the hypochondriac philosophers) that he will not weary his audience with the mournful repetitions of τοῦ! τοῦ! Yet with these very words Strepsiades opens the very play we are upon.

[4] The name of Eupolis' stolen play is mentioned in the text (Maricaas): the object of imitation was the *Knights* of Aristophanes. The poet, a few lines farther, more particularly alludes to the use which had been made of his simile of fishing in troubled waters.

Holding the game in chase, which I had rous'd.
If there be any here, who laugh with these,
Let such not smile with me; but if this night
Ye crown these scenes with merited applause,
Posterity shall justify your taste.

Semichorus. Great Jove, supreme of Gods, and heav'n's high king,
First I invoke; next him the Trident's lord,
Whose mighty stroke smites the wild waves asunder,
And makes the firm earth tremble; thee from whom
We draw our being, all-inspiring Air,
Parent of nature; and thee, radiant Sun,
Thron'd in thy flaming chariot, I invoke,
Dear to the gods and by the world ador'd.

Chorus of Clouds. Most grave and sapient judges, hear the charge,
Which we shall now prefer, of slights ill brook'd
By us your wrong'd appellants: for whilst we
The patronesses of your state, the Clouds,
Of all the powers celestial serve you most,
You graceless mortals serve us not at all;
Nor smoke, nor sacrifice ascends from you,
But blank ingratitude and cold neglect.
If some rash enterprise you set on foot,
Some brainless project, straight with rain or thunder,
Sure warnings, we apprise you of your folly:
When late you made that offspring of a tanner,
That Paphlagonian odious to the gods,
The general of your armies, mark how fierce
We scowl'd upon you, and indignant roll'd
Our thunders intermixt with flashing fires;
The Moon forsook her course, and the vext Sun
Quench'd his bright torch, disdaining to behold
Cleon your chief, yet chief that Cleon was,
(For it should seem a proverb[1] with your people,

[1] It is less to a proverb than to one of the old Athenian mythical tales that allusion is here made. In the celebrated contest, which took place between Minerva and Neptune for the presidency over Athens, the former, it is well known, was victorious. Irritated at his defeat, the god of the sea pronounced a curse over the city which had been the object of their strife; and, in virtue of this imprecation, measures ill planned and ill advised were to be the common characteristics of Athenian politics. The goddess had the power of correcting, though not of altering, this sentence. By her decree, the opinions which directed measures were to be no tests of the

That measures badly taken best succeed):
But if you'll learn of us the ready mode
To cancel your past errors, and ensure
Fame and good-fortune for the public weal,
You have nought else to do, but stop the swallow
Of that wide-gaping cormorant, that thief
Convicted and avow'd, with a neat noose
Drawn tight and fitted to his scurvy throat.

Semichorus. Thou too, Apollo, of thy native isle,
Upon the Cinthian mount high thron'd, the king,
Hear and be present! thou, Ephesian goddess,
Whose golden shrine the Lydian damsels serve
With rich and costly worship; thou, Minerva,
Arm'd with the dreadful ægis, virgin queen,
And patroness of Athens; thou, who hold'st
Divided empire on Parnassus' heights,
Lead hither thy gay train of revellers,
Convivial god, and thus invok'd approach!

Chorus. As we were hither journeying, in midway
We crost upon the Moon,[1] who for a while
Held us in converse, and with courteous greeting
To this assembly charg'd us—This premis'd,
The tenor of our next instruction points
To anger and complaint for ill returns
On your part to good offices on her's.
First for the loan of her bright silver lamp
So long held out to you, by which you've sav'd
Your torch and lacquey for this many a night.
More she could name, if benefits avail'd;
But you have lost all reck'ning of your feasts,
And turn'd your calendar quite topsy-turvy;
So that the deities, who find themselves
Bilk'd of their dues, and supperless for lack
Of their accustom'd sacrifices, rail
At her, poor Moon, and vent their hungry spite,

consequences which should attend them; or rather, the success of measures was to be inversely as the wisdom which suggested them. Whoever was the author of this fable, he seems to have formed no inaccurate idea of the Athenians, so foolish frequently, and precipitate in their counsels; so wise and steady in their actions.

[1] The humour of this passage is derived from the reformation then taking place in the Athenian calendar, by the celebrated astronomer Meton.

As she were in the fault; whilst you, forsooth,
Maliciously select our gala days,
When feasting would be welcome, for your suits
And criminal indictments; but when we
Keep fast and put on mourning for the loss
Of Memnon or Sarpedon, sons of Heaven,
Then, then you mock us with the savoury odour
Of smoking dainties, which we may not taste:
Therefore it is, that when this year ye sent
Your deputy Amphictyon to the diet,
(Hyperbolus forsooth) in just revenge
We tore away his crown, and drove him back
To warn you how you slight the Moon again.

SOCRATES (*coming out of the house in violent indignation*), STREPSIADES, CHORUS

Socr. O vivifying breath, æthereal air,
And thou profoundest chaos, witness for me
If ever wretch were seen so gross and dull,
So stupid and perplext as this old clown,
Whose shallow intellect can entertain
No image nor impression of a thought;
But ere you've told it, it is lost and gone!
'Tis time however he should now come forth
In the broad day—What hoa! Strepsiades—
Take up your pallet; bring yourself and it
Into the light.
Streps. Yes, if the bugs would let me.
Socr. Quick, quick, I say; set down your load and listen!
Streps. Lo! here am I.
Socr. Come, tell me what it is
That you would learn besides what I have taught you;
Is it of measure, verse, or modulation?
Streps. Of measure by all means, for I was fobb'd
Of two days' dole i' th' measure of my meal
By a damn'd knavish huckster.
Socr. Pish! who talks
Of meal? I ask which metre you prefer,
Tetrameter or trimeter.
Streps. I answer—

Give me a pint pot.[1]

Socr. Yes, but that's no answer.

Streps. No answer! stake your money, and I'll wager
That your tetrameter is half my pint pot.

Socr. Go to the gallows, clodpate, with your pint pot!
Will nothing stick to you? But come, perhaps
We may try further and fare better with you—
Suppose I spoke to you of modulation;
Will you be taught of that?

Streps. Tell me first,
Will I be profited? will I be paid
The meal that I was chous'd of? tell me that.

Socr. You will be profited by being taught
To bear your part at table in some sort
After a decent fashion; you will learn
Which verse is most commensurate and fit
To the arm'd chorus in the dance of war,
And which with most harmonious cadence guides
The dactyl in his course poetical.

Streps. The dactyl, quotha! Sure I know that well.

Socr. As how? discuss.

Streps. Here, at my fingers' end;
This is my dactyl, and has been my dactyl
Since I could count my fingers.

Socr. Oh! the dolt.

Streps. I wish to be no wiser in these matters.

Socr. What then?

Streps. Why then, teach me no other art
But the fine art of cozening.

Socr. Granted; still
There is some previous matter, as for instance
The genders male and female—Can you name them?

Streps. I were a fool else—These are masculine;
Ram, bull, goat, dog, and pullet.

Socr. There you're out:
Pullet is male and female.

Streps. Tell me how?

[1] There was a certain measure, as near as possible to our pint, which the Greeks dealt out daily of meal to their slaves. To this Strepsiades alludes when he says he was defrauded of two measures, and to this humorous *mal-entendu* he obstinately adheres through the whole scene.

Socr. Cock and hen pullet—So they should be nam'd.
Streps. And so they should, by the æthereal air!
You've hit it; for which rare discovery,
Take all the meal this cardopus contains.
Socr. Why there again you sin against the genders.
To call your bolting-tub a cardopus,
Making that masculine which should be fem'nine.
Streps. How do I make my bolting-tub a male?
Socr. Did you not call it cardopus? As well
You might have call'd Cleonymus a man;
He and your bolting-tub alike belong
To t'other sex, believe me.
Streps. Well, my trough
Shall be a cardopa and he Cleonyma;
Will that content you?
Socr. Yes, and while you live
Learn to distinguish sex in proper names.
Streps. I do; the female I am perfect in.
Socr. Give me the proof.
Streps. Lysilla, she's a female;
Philinna, and Demetria, and Cleitagora.
Socr. Now name your males.
Streps. A thousand—as for instance,
Philoxenus, Melesias, and Amynias.
Socr. Call you these masculine, egregious dunce?
Streps. Are they not such with you?
Socr. No; put the case,
You and Amynias meet—how will you greet him?
Streps. Why, thus for instance—Hip! holla! Amynia!
Socr. There, there! you make a wench of him at once.
Streps. And fit it is for one who shuns the field;[1]
A coward ought not to be call'd a man;
Why teach me what is known to all the world?
Socr. Aye, why indeed?—but come, repose yourself.
Streps. Why so?
Socr. For meditation's sake: lie down.
Streps. Not on this pallet I beseech you, sir;
But if I must lie down, let me repose

[1] This Amynias seems to have had his full share of abuse from the comic poets of his time: Eupolis, Crates, and our author, in various parts, bestow it very plentifully.

On the bare earth and meditate.
Socr. Away!
There's nothing but this bed will cherish thought.
Streps. It cherishes, alas! a host of bugs,
That show no mercy on me.
Socr. Come, begin,
Cudgel your brains and turn yourself about;
Now ruminate awhile, and if you start
A thought that puzzles you, try t'other side,
And turn to something else, but not to sleep;
Suffer not sleep to close your eyes one moment.
Streps. (*after a considerable pause*). Ah! woe is me; ah, woeful, well-a-day!
Socr. What ails you? why this moaning?
Streps. I am lost;
I've rous'd the natives from their hiding holes;
A colony of bugs in ambuscade
Have fall'n upon me: belly, back, and ribs,
No part is free: I feed a commonwealth.
Socr. Take not your sufferings too much to heart,
Streps. How can I choose—a wretch made up of wants!
Here am I penniless and spiritless,
Without a skin, Heav'n knows, without a shoe;
And to complete my miseries here I lie,
Like a starv'd sentinel upon his post,
At watch and ward, till I am shrunk to nothing.
[*A pause of some duration.*
Socr. How now; how fare you? Have you sprung a thought?
Strep. Yes, yes, so help me Neptune!
Socr. Hah! what is it?
Streps. Why I am thinking if these cursed vermin
Will leave one fragment of my carcass free.
Socr. A plague confound you!
Streps. Spare yourself that prayer;
I'm plagued already to your heart's content.
Socr. Prythee don't be so tender of your skin;
Tuck yourself up and buff it like a man:
Keep your skull under cover, and depend on't
'Twill make your brain bring forth some precious project
For furthering your good-fortune at the expense
Of little else but honesty and justice.

Streps. Ah! would to Heav'n some friendly soul would help me
To a fine project how to cheat the bugs
With a sleek lambskin. [*A long pause.*
Socr. Whereabouts, I trow,
Sits the wind now? What ails you? are you dozing?
Streps. Not I, by Heaven!
Socr. Can you start nothing yet?
Streps. Nothing, so help me.
Socr. Will your head breed no project,
Tho' nurs'd so daintily?
Streps. What should it breed?
Tell me, sweet Socrates; give me some hint.
Socr. Say first what 'tis you wish.
Streps. A thousand times,
Ten thousand times I've said it o'er and o'er—
My creditors, my creditors—'Tis them
I would fain bilk.
Socr. Go to! get under cover,
Keep your head warm, and rarify your wits
Till they shall sprout into some fine conceit,
Some scheme of happy promise: sift it well,
Divide, abstract, compound, and when 'tis ready,
Out with it boldly.
Streps. Miserable me!
Would I were out!
Socr. Lie still,[1] and if you strike
Upon a thought that baffles you, break off
From that entanglement and try another.
So shall your wits be fresh to start again.
Streps. (*not attending to what Socrates is saying*). Hah! my dear boy! My precious Socrates!
Socr. What would'st thou, gaffer?
Streps. I have sprung a thought,
A plot upon my creditors.
Socr. Discuss!
Streps. Answer me this—Suppose that I should hire
A witch, who some fair night shall raise a spell,

[1] Socrates' instructions for soliciting the inspiration of some sudden thought are a banter upon the pretended visions and communications with dæmons of the sophists and philosophers; tricks brought by them out of Egypt and the East, which served to impose upon the credulous and vulgar.

Whereby I'll snap the moon from out her sphere
And bag her.
Socr. What to do!
Streps. To hold her fast,
And never let her run her courses more;
So shall I 'scape my creditors.
Socr. How so?
Streps. Because the calculations of their usury
Are made from month to month.
Socr. A gallant scheme;
And yet methinks I could suggest a hint
As practicable and no less ingenious—
Suppose you are arrested for a debt,
We'll say five talents, how will you contrive
To cancel at a stroke both debt and writ?
Streps. Gramercy! I can't tell you how off hand;
It needs some cogitation.
Socr. Were you apt,
Such cogitations would not be to seek;
They would be present at your fingers' ends,
Buzzing alive, like chafers in a string,
Ready to slip and fly.
Streps. I've hit the nail
That does the deed, and so you will confess.
Socr. Out with it!
Streps. Good chance but you have noted
A pretty toy, a trinket in the shops,
Which being rightly held produceth fire
From things combustible—
Socr. A burning glass,
Vulgarly call'd—
Streps. You are right; 'tis so.
Socr. Proceed!
Streps. Put the case now your whoreson bailiff comes,
Shows me his writ[1]—I, standing thus, d'ye mark me,
In the sun's stream, measuring my distance, guide
My focus to a point upon his writ,
And off if goes in fumo!
Socr. By the Graces!

[1] It must be remembered that documents of this kind were inscribed n tables of wax.

'Tis wittingly devis'd.
Streps. The very thought
Of his five talents cancel'd at a stroke
Makes my heart dance for joy.
Socr. But now again—
Streps. What next?
Socr. Suppose yourself at bar, surpris'd
Into a suit, no witnesses at hand,
The judge prepar'd to pass decree against you—
How will you parry that?
Streps. As quick as thought—
Socr. But how?
Streps. Incontinently hang myself,
And baulk the suitor—
Socr. Come, you do but jest.
Streps. Serious, by all the gods! A man that's dead
Is out of the law's reach.
Socr. I've done with you—
Instruction's lost upon you; your vile jests
Put me beyond all patience.
Streps. Nay, but tell me
What is it, my good fellow, that offends thee?
Socr. Your execrable lack of memory.
Why how now; what was the first rule I taught you?
Streps. Say'st thou the first? the very first—what was it?
Why, let me see; 'twas something, was it not?
About the meal—Out on it! I have lost it.
Socr. Oh thou incorrigible, old doating blockhead,
Can hanging be too bad for thee?
Streps. Why there now,
Was ever man so us'd? If I can't make
My tongue keep pace with your's, teach it the quirks
And quibbles of your sophistry at once,
I may go hang—I am a fool forsooth—
Where shall I turn? Oh gracious Clouds, befriend me,
Give me your counsel.
Chorus. This it is, old man—
If that your son at home is apt and docile,
Depute him in your stead, and send him hither.
Streps. My son is well endow'd with nature's gifts,
But obstinately bent against instruction.

Chorus. And do you suffer it?
Streps. What can I do?
He's a fine full-grown youth, a dashing fellow,
And by the mother's side of noble blood:
I'll feel my way with him—but if he kicks,
Befall what may, nothing shall hinder me
But I will kick him headlong out of doors,
And let him graze ev'n where he will for me—
Wait only my return; I'll soon dispatch. [*Exit.*
Chorus. "Highly favour'd shalt thou be,
With gifts and graces kept in store
For those who our divinities adore,
And to no other altars bend the knee:
And well we know th' obedience shown
By this old clown deriv'd alone
From lessons taught by thee.
Wherefore to swell thy lawful gains,
Thou soon shalt skin this silly cur,
Whom thou hast put in such a stir,
And take his plunder for thy pains:
For mark how often dupes like him devise
Projects that only serve t' enrich the wise."

STREPSIADES (*coming out of his house to his Son, who stands at the door*), PHEIDIPPIDES.

Streps. Out of my house! I call the Clouds to witness
You shall not set a foot within my doors.
Go to your Lord Megacles! Get you hence,
And gnaw his posts for hunger.
Pheidip. Ah, poor man!
I see how it is with you. You are mad,
Stark mad, by Jupiter!
Streps. You swear by Jupiter!
Why then, I swear by Jove there's no such god—
Now who is mad but you?
Pheidip. Why do you turn
Such solemn truths to ridicule?
Streps. I laugh
To hear a child prate of such old men's fables;
But list to what I'll tell you, learn of me,

And from a child you shall become a man—
But keep the secret close, do you mark me, close;
Beware of babbling.

Pheidip. Heyday! what is coming?

Streps. You swore but now by Jupiter—

Pheidip. I did.

Streps. Mark now what 'tis to have a friend like me—
I tell you at a word there is no Jupiter.

Pheidip. How then?

Streps. He's off; I tell it you for truth;
He's out of place, and Vortex reigns instead.

Pheidip. Vortex indeed! What freak has caught you now?

Streps. No freak, 'tis fact.

Pheidip. Who tells you this?

Streps. E'en Socrates the Melian,
And Chærephon, the flea philosopher.

Pheidip. And are you so far gone in dotage, sir,
As to be dup'd by men like them, fellows
Whose bile has overflowed them?

Streps. Keep a good tongue;
Take heed you slander not such worthy men,
So wise withal and learned—men so pure
And cleanly in their morals, that no razor
Ever profan'd their beards; their unwash'd hides
Ne'er dabbled in a bath, nor wafted scent
Of od'rous unguent as they pass'd along.
But you, a prodigal fine spark, make waste
And havoc of my means, as I were dead
And out of thought—but come, turn in and learn.

Pheidip. What can I learn or profit from such teachers?

Streps. Thou canst learn everything that turns to profit;
But first and foremost thou canst learn to know
Thyself how totally unlearn'd thou art;
How mere a blockhead, and how dull of brain—
But wait awhile with patience— [*Enters the house hastily*

Pheidip. Woe is me!
How shall I deal with this old crazy father?
What course pursue with one, whose reason wanders
Out of all course? Shall I take out the statute,
And cite him for a lunatic; or wait
Till nature and his phrenzy, with the help

Of the undertaker, shall provide a cure?

[*Strepsiades returns, with a cock in one hand and a hen in the other.*

Streps. Now we shall see! Lo! what have I got here?

Pheidip. A chicken—

Streps. Well and this?

Pheidip. A chicken also.

Streps. Are they the same then? Have a care, good boy,
How you expose yourself, and for the future
Describe them cock and hen-chick severally.

Pheidip. Ridiculous! Is this the grand discovery
You have just borrow'd from these [1] sons o' th' dunghill?

Streps. This, and a thousand others—but being old
And lax of memory, I lose it all
As fast as it comes in.

Pheidip. Yes, and methinks
By the same token you have lost your cloak.

Streps. No, I've not lost it; I have laid it out
Upon the arts and sciences.

Pheidip. Your shoes—
They're vanish'd too. How have you laid them out?

Streps. Upon the commonwealth—Like Pericles [2]
I'm a barefooted patriot—Now no more;
Do as thou wilt, so thou wilt but conform
And humour me this once, as in times past
I humour'd thee, and in thy playful age
Brought thee a penny go-cart from the fair,
Purchas'd with what my legal labours earn'd,
The fee for my attendance.

[*Going towards the house of Socrates.*

Pheidip. You'll repent,
My life upon 't; you will repent of this.

[*Following reluctantly.*

Streps. No matter, so you'll humour me—What, hoa!
Why Socrates, I say, come forth, behold,

[1] γηγενεις—Titanes—himmelstürmer; as Wieland very properly translates.

[2] When Pheidippides asks his father, "how he has laid out his shoes," the answer should have been, "on necessary purposes, like Pericles;" alluding to a well-known item in Pericles' accounts, which, equally to the credit of the mutual confidence of Pericles and his fellow-citizens, was allowed to pass unexamined, under the conviction that it had been applied to the purpose of withdrawing an invading army from Attica.

Here is my son!
I've brought him, tho' in faith
Sorely against the grain.

SOCRATES *enters.*

Socr. Aye, he's a novice,
And knows not [1] where the panniers hang as yet.
Pheidip. I would you'd hang yourself there in their stead.
Streps. Oh monstrous impudence! this to your master!
Socr. Mark how the idiot quibbles upon *hanging*.
Driv'ling and making mouths—Can he be taught
The loopholes of the law; whence to escape,
How to evade, and when to press a suit;—
Or tune his lips to that soft rhetoric,
Which steals upon the ear, and melts to pity
The heart of the stern judge?
Streps. Come, never doubt him;
He is a lad of parts, and from a child
Took wondrously to dabbling in the mud,
Whereof he'd build you up a house [2] so natural
As would amaze you, trace you out a ship,
Make you a little cart out of the sole
Of an old shoe mayhap, and from the rind
Of a pomegranate cut you out a frog,
You'd swear it was alive. Now what do you think?
Hath he not wit enough to comprehend
Each rule both right and wrong? Or if not both,
The latter way at least—There he'll be perfect.
Socr. Let him prepare: His lecturers are ready.
Streps. I will retire—When next we meet, remember
I look to find him able to contend
'Gainst right and reason, and outwit them both. [3*Exit.*

[1] The text intimates, "And has not yet had practice in the panniers;" alluding to the panniers in which Socrates used to meditate.

[2] Plato, in his system of education, strongly recommends that the pupil should be taught to commence his own course of instruction in this amusing manner.

[3] A preparatory choral song, which preceded the entrance of the allegorical Logœ, is now irretrievably lost.

DICÆOLOGOS *and* ADICÆOLOGOS *enter.*

Dicæol. Come forth; turn out, thou bold audacious man,
And face this company.
Adicæol. Most willingly:
I do desire no better: take your ground
Before this audience, I am sure to triumph.
Dicæol. And who are you that vapour in this fashion?
Adicæol. Fashion itself—the very style of the times.
Dicæol. Aye, of the modern times, and them and you
I set at naught.
Adicæol. I shall bring down your pride.
Dicæol. By what most witty weapon?
Adicæol. By the gift
Of a most apt invention.
Dicæol. Then I see
You have your fools to back you.
Adicæol. No,—the wise
Are those I deal with.
Dicæol. I shall spoil your market.
Adicæol. As how, good sooth?
Dicæol. By speaking such plain truths
As may appeal to justice.
Adicæol. What is justice?
There's no such thing—I traverse your appeal.
Dicæol. How! No such thing as justice?
Adicæol. No; where is it?
Dicæol. With the immortal gods.
Adicæol. If it be there,
How chanc'd it Jupiter himself escap'd
For his unnatural deeds to his own father?
Dicæol. For shame, irreverent wretch, thus do you talk?
I sicken at impiety so gross,
My stomach kicks against it.
Adicæol. You are craz'd;
Your wits, old gentleman, are off the hinges.
Dicæol. You are a vile blasphemer and buffoon.
Adicæol. Go on! you pelt me—but it is with roses.
Dicæol. A scoffer!
Adicæol. Every word your malice vents
Weaves a fresh wreath of triumph for my brows.

Dicæol. A parricide!
Adicæol. Proceed, and spare me not—
You shower down gold upon me.
Dicæol. Lead, not gold,
Had been your retribution in times past.
Adicæol. Aye, but times present cover me with glory.
Dicæol. You are too wicked.
Adicæol. You are much too weak.
Dicæol. Thank your own self, if our Athenian fathers
Coop up their sons at home, and fear to trust them
Within your schools, conscious that nothing else
But vice and folly can be learnt of you.
Adicæol. Methinks, friend, your's is but a ragged trade.
Dicæol. And your's, oh shame! a thriving one, tho' late,
A perfect Telephus, you tramp'd the street
With beggar's wallet cramm'd with hungry scraps,
Choice gather'd from—[1] Pandeletus' larder.
Adicæol. Oh! what rare wisdom you remind me of!
Dicæol. Oh, what rank folly their's, who rule this city,
And let it nourish such a pest as you,
To sap the morals of the rising age.
Adicæol. You'll not inspire your pupil with these notions,
Old hoary-headed time!
Dicæol. I will inspire him,
If he has grace, to shun the malady
Of your eternal clack.
Adicæol. Turn to me, youth!
And let him rail at leisure,
Dicæol. Keep your distance,
And lay your hands upon him at your peril.
Chor. (*interposing*). Come, no more wrangling.—Let us hear you both;
You of the former time produce your rules
Of ancient discipline—of modern, you—
That so, both weigh'd, the candidate may judge
Who offers fairest, and make choice between you.

[1] The reader of the *Acharnians* will easily perceive what name the author meant his hearers to supply at the pause purposely made as the line is just concluding. The substitution of the malignant Pandeletus for the sophisticating Euripides is one of those two-sided blows, and jokes by surprise, in which both the Greeks and Romans appear to have taken a pleasure, that modern readers rarely sympathise in.

Dicæol. I close with the proposal.
Adicæol. 'Tis agreed.
Chor. But which of you shall open?
Adicæol. That shall he:
I yield him up that point; and in reply,
My words, like arrows levelled at a butt,
Shall pierce him through and through; then, if he rallies,
If he comes on again with a rejoinder,
I'll launch a swarm of syllogisms at him,
That, like a nest of hornets, shall belabour him,
Till they have left him not an eye to see with.
Chor. "Now, sirs, exert your utmost care,
And gravely for the charge prepare;
The well-rang'd hoard of thought explore,
Where sage experience keeps her store;
All the resources of the mind
Employment in this cause will find,—
And he, who gives the best display
Of argument, shall win the day:
Wisdom this hour at issue stands,
And gives her fate into your hands;
Your's is a question that divides
And draws out friends on different sides:
Therefore on you, who, with such zealous praise,
Applaud the discipline of former days,
On you I call; now is your time to show
You merit no less praise than you bestow."
Dicæol. Thus summon'd, I prepare myself to speak
Of manners primitive, and that good time,
Which I have seen, when discipline prevail'd,
And modesty was sanctioned by the laws,
No babbling then was suffer'd in our schools;—
The scholar's test was silence. The whole group
In orderly procession [1] sallied forth
Right onwards, without straggling, to attend

[1] This beautiful description will remind the reader of Xenophon's picture of the severe discipline of Spartan youth, who were met in the streets in silent step, with each hand wrapped up in their vests, and regarding only what was just before them; with no more motion in their eyes than if they were made of brass; no more sound in their voices than if they were marble statues, and bashful as virgins who have never left the female apartment.

Their teacher in harmonics; though the snow
Fell on them thick as meal, the hardy brood
Breasted the storm uncloak'd: their harps were stung
Not to ignoble strains, for they were taught
A loftier key, whether to chant the name [1]
Of Pallas, terrible amidst the blaze
Of cities overthrown, or wide and far
To spread, as custom was, the echoing peal.
There let no low buffoon intrude his tricks,
Let no capricious quavering on a note,
No running of divisions high and low
Break the pure stream of harmony; no Phrynis [2]
Practising wanton warblings out of place—
Woe to his back that so was found offending!
Hard stripes and heavy would reform his taste.
Decent and chaste their postures in the school
Of their gymnastic exercises; none
Expos'd an attitude that might provoke
Irregular desire; their lips ne'er mov'd
In love-inspiring whispers, and their walks
From eyes obscene were sacred and secure,
Hot herbs, the old man's diet, were proscrib'd;
No radish, anise, parsley, deck'd their board;
No rioting, no revelling was there
At feast or frolic, no unseemly touch
Or signal, that inspires the hint impure.

Adicæol. Why these are maxims [3] obsolete and stale:
Worm-eaten rules, coeval with the hymns
Of old Ceceydas and Buphonian feasts.

Dicæol. Yet so were train'd the heroes, that imbru'd
The field of Marathon with hostile blood;
This discipline it was that braced their nerves
And fitted them for conquest. You, forsooth,
At great Minerva's festival produce
Your martial dancers, not as they were wont,

[1] The original, for which Mr. Cumberland has given a periphrasis, consists of the beginnings of two old choral songs, well known to the audience.

[2] Phrynis of Mitylene, the scholar of Aristocleides, is here meant.

[3] The original, in taunting the staleness of these notions, puts them on a footing with *four* of the most antiquated of Athenian practices; the sacrifices in honour of Zeus Polieus, or Jupiter the protector of the city;—the practice of wearing golden cicadæ in the hair—the time when the songs of Ceceydas were in fashion—and the Buphonian Festival.

But smother'd underneath the tawdry load
Of cumbrous armour, till I sweat to see them
Dangling their shields in such unseemly sort
As mars the sacred measure of the dance.
Be wise, therefore, young man, and turn to me.
Turn to the better guide, so shall you learn
To scorn the noisy forum, shun the bath,
And turn with blushes from the scene impure:
Then conscious innocence shall make you bold
To spurn the injurious, but to reverend age
Meek and submissive, rising from your seat
To pay the homage due, nor shall you ever
Or wring the parent's soul, or stain your own.
In purity of manners you shall live
A bright example; vain shall be the lures
Of the stage-wanton [1] floating in the dance,
Vain all her arts to snare you in her arms,
And strip you of your virtue and good name.
No petulant reply shall you oppose
To fatherly commands, nor taunting vent
Irreverent mockery on his hoary head,
Crying—" Behold Iäpetus [2] himself! "
Poor thanks for all his fond parental care.

Adicæol. Aye, my brave youth, do, follow these fine rules,
And learn by them to be as mere a swine,
Driveller, and dolt, as any of the sons
Of our Hippocrates; [3]—I swear by Bacchus,
Folly and foul contempt shall be your doom.

Dicæol. Not so, but fair and fresh in youthful bloom
Amongst our young athletics you shall shine;

[1] The word, which Mr. Cumberland translates stage-wanton, is in the original *ορχηζρις*, and implies one of those Grecian females who made it their employment (and the profession by no means wanted for numbers) to contribute to the enjoyment of private convivial parties by the exhibition of dancing. No females were admitted on the Greek stage for the purposes of recitation, or in the orchestra for the purposes of dancing.

[2] Iäpetus here stands for the *ne plus ultra* of antiquity. Thus in Lucian's *Saturnalia*, the great founder of that time of festivity, comparing his happy situation, now that he had surrendered his throne to Jupiter, observes, " I now live at my ease, and as an old man should live—I drink nectar without mixture, and I talk over old stories with Iäpetus and others my coevals."

[3] The sons of Hippocrates (better known to the spectators than they are to us) were proverbial for their stupidity.

Not in the forum loit'ring time away
In gossip prattle, like our gang of idlers,
Nor yet in some vexatious paltry suit
Wrangling and quibbling in our petty courts.
But in the solemn academic grove,
Crown'd with the modest reed, fit converse hold
With your collegiate equals; there serene,
Calm as the scene around you, underneath
The fragrant foliage where the ilex spreads,
Where the deciduous poplar strews her leaves,
Where the tall elm-tree and wide-stretching plane
Sigh to the fanning breeze, you shall inhale
Sweet odours wafted in the breath of spring.
This is the regimen that will insure
A healthful body and a vigorous mind,
A countenance serene, expanded chest,
Heroic stature and a temperate tongue;
But take these modern masters, and behold
These blessings all revers'd; a pallid cheek,
Shrunk shoulders, chest contracted, sapless limbs,
A tongue that never rests, and mind debas'd,
By their vile sophistry perversely taught
To call good evil, evil good, and be
That thing, which nature spurns at, that disease,
A mere Antimachus,[1] the sink of vice.

Chorus. "Oh sage instructor, how sublime
These maxims of the former time!
How sweet this unpolluted stream
Of eloquence, how pure the theme!
Thrice happy they, whose lot was cast
Amongst the generation past,
When virtuous morals were display'd
And these grave institutes obey'd.
Now you, that vaunt yourself so high,
Prepare; we wait for your reply,
And recollect, or ere you start,
You take in hand no easy part;
Well hath he spoke, and reasons good

[1] Antimachus, according to the Scholiast, appears to have been equally conspicuous for his beauty, his effeminacy, and the utter corruption of his morals.

By better only are withstood;
Sharpen your wits then, or you'll meet
Contempt as certain as defeat."

Adicæol. Doubt not I'm ready, full up to the throat
And well nigh chok'd with plethory of words,
Impatient to discharge them. I do know
The mighty masters of the modern school
Term me the Lower Logic, so distinguish'd
From the old practice of the upper time,
By him personified; which name of honour
I gain'd as the projector of that method,
Which can confute and puzzle all the courts
Of law and justice—An invention worth
Thousands to them who practise it, whereas
It nonsuits all opponents.—Let that pass.
Now take a sample of it in the ease,
With which I'll baffle this old vaunting pedant
With his warm baths, that he forsooth forbids.
Harkye, old man, discuss, if so it please you,
Your excellent good reason for this rule,
That interdicts warm bathing.

Dicæol. Simply this—
I hold it a relaxer, rendering men
Effeminate and feeble.

Adicæol. Hold awhile—
I have you on the hook. Answer me this—
Of all the heroes Jupiter has father'd,
Which is for strength, for courage, and a course
Of labours most renown'd?

Dicæol. I know of none
Superior in those qualities to Hercules.

Adicæol. And who e'er heard Herculean baths [1] were cold?
Yet Hercules himself you own was strong.

Dicæol. Aye, this is in the very style of the times;
These are the dialectics now in fashion
With our young sophists, who frequent the baths
Whilst the palæstra starves.

Adicæol. I grant you this;
It is the style of the times, by you condemn'd,

[1] Tepid baths, according to fabulous legends, being the gift of Vulcan to Hercules, it became a fashion to term all such Herculean.

By me approv'd, and not without good cause;
For how but thus doth ancient Nestor talk?
Can Homer err? Were all his wise men fools?
They are my witnesses.—Now for this tongue,
This member out of use by his decree,
Not so by mine.—His scholar must be silent
And chaste withal—damping prescriptions both—
For what good fortune ever did betide
The mute and modest? Instance me a case.

Dicæol. Many—Chaste Peleus[1] so obtained his sword.

Adicæol. His sword! and what did Peleus gain by that?
Battle and blows this modest Peleus gain'd;
Whilst mean Hyperbolus, whose wretched craft
Was lamp-making, by craft of viler sort
Garbel'd his thousands, solid coin, not swords.

Dicæol. But continence befriended Peleus so,
As won the goddess Thetis to his bed.

Adicæol. And drove her out of it—for he was cold,
Languid and listless: she was brisk and stirring,
And sought the sport elsewhere. Now are you answered?
Good sooth you're in your dotage. Mark, young sir,
These are the fruits of continence: you see
What pleasure you must forfeit to preserve it—
All the delights that woman can bestow;
No am'rous sports to catch the fair one's smile,
No luscious dainties shall you then partake,
No gay convivial revels, where the glass
With peals of laughter circulates around;
These you must sacrifice, and without these
What is your life?—So much for your delights.—
Now let us see how stands your score with nature—
You're in some scrape we'll say—intrigue—adultery—
You're caught, convicted, crush'd—for what can save you?
You have no powers of speech—but arm'd by me,
You're up to all occasions: Nothing fear;
Ev'n give your genius scope; laugh, frolic, sport,

[1] Peleus, having withstood the solicitations of Atalante, wife of Acastus, was rewarded for his continence by the gods, with a sword of celestial temper, the workmanship of Vulcan. But Atalante, having accused him to her husband, and stimulated Acastus to revenge a supposed attempt upon her honour, Peleus found himself driven to declare war against him, and to this Adicæologos alludes in his retort upon Dicæologos.

And flout at shame; for should the wittol spouse
Detect you in the fact, you shall so pose him
In his appeal, that nothing shall stick to you;
For Jove shall take the blame from off your shoulders,
Being himself a cuckold-making god,
And you a poor frail mortal—Why should you
Be wiser, stronger, purer than a god?

Dicæol. But what if this your scholar should incur
Th' adulterer's correction,—pill'd and sanded,
And garnish'd with a radish in his crupper,
The scoff of all beholders—What fine quirk
Will clear him at that pinch, but he must pass
For a most perfect Ganimede?

Adicæol. What then?
Where is the harm?

Dicæol. Can greater harm befall him?

Adicæol. What will you say if here I can confute you?

Dicæol. Nothing—my silence shall confess your triumph.

Adicæol. Come on then—answer me to what I ask.
Our advocates—what are they?

Dicæol. Catamites.

Adicæol. Our tragic poets—what are they?

Dicæol. The same.

Adicæol. Good, very good!—our demagogues—

Dicæol. No better.

Adicæol. See there! discern you not that you are foil'd?
Cast your eyes round this company!—

Dicæol. I do.

Adicæol. And what do you discover?

Dicæol. Numerous birds
Of the same filthy feather, so Heaven help me!
This man I mark; and this, and this fine fop
With his curl'd locks.—To all these I can swear.

Adicæol. What say you then?

Dicæol. I say I am confuted—
Here, wagtails, catch my cloak—I'll be amongst you.

Socr. (*to Strepsiades, just returned*). Now, friend, what say you? who shall school your son?

Streps. School him and scourge him, take him to yourself.
And mind you whet him to an edge on both sides,
This for slight skirmish, that for stronger work.

Socr. Doubt not, we'll finish him to your content
A perfect sophist.
Pheidip. Perfect skin and bone—
That I can well believe.
Socr. No more—Away! [*Strepsiades retires.*
Pheidip. Trust me you've made a rod for your own back.
[*Follows Socrates into the house.*

Chorus address the Spectators.

Now to our candid judges we shall tell
What recompense they may expect from us,
If they indeed are studious to deserve it:
First, on your new-sown grounds in kindly showers,
Postponing other calls, we will descend.
The bearing branches of your vines shall sprout,
Nor scorch'd with summer heats nor chill'd with rain.
This to our friends who serve us,—but to him,
Who dares to slight us, let that mortal hear,
And tremble at the vengeance which awaits him:
Nor wine nor oil shall that man's farm produce;
For when his olive trees shall yield their fruit,
And his ripe vineyard tempts the gath'rer's hand,
We'll batter him to ruin, lay him bare;
And if we catch him with his roof untiled,
Heav'ns! how we'll drench him with a pelting storm
Of hail and rain incessant! above all,
Let him beware upon the wedding night;
When he brings home his own or kinsman's bride,
Let him look to't! Then we'll come down in torrents,
That he shall rather take his chance in Egypt,
Than stand the vengeful soaking we will give him.

STREPSIADES (*with a sack of meal on his shoulder, and talking to himself*).

Lo! here's the fifth day gone—the fourth—the third—
The second too—day of all days to me
Most hateful and accurs'd—the dreadful eve,
Ushering the new moon, that lets in the tide
Of happy creditors, all sworn against me,
To rack and ruin me beyond redemption.

I, like a courteous debtor, who would fain
Soften their flinty bosoms, thus accost them—
"Ah, my good sir, this payment comes upon me
At a bad time, excuse me—That bill's due,
But you'll extend your grace—This you will cancel,
And totally acquit me."—By no means;
All with one voice cry out, they will be paid,
And I must be be-knav'd into the bargain,
And threaten'd with a writ to mend the matter—
Well, let it come!—They may ev'n do their worst;
I care not so my son hath learnt the trick
Of this new rhetoric, as will appear
When I have beat this door—(*knocks at the door*)—Boy, boy! come forth!

SOCRATES *comes forth.*

Socr. Hail to Strepsiades!
Streps. Thrice hail to Socrates!
But first I pray you (*setting down the meal against the door*) take this dole of meal.
In token of the reverence I bear you;
And now, so please you, tell me of my son,
Your late noviciate. Comes he on apace?
Socr. He apprehends acutely.
Streps. Oh brave news!
Oh the transcendant excellence of fraud!
Socr. Yes, you may set your creditors at naught—
Streps. And their avouchers too?—
Socr. Had they a thousand.
Streps. (*singing and dancing*). Then I'll sing out my song, and sing aloud,
And it shall be—Woe, woe to all your gang,
Ye money-jobbing caitiffs, usurers, sharks!
Hence with your registers, your cents-per-cent;
I fear you not; ye cannot hook me now.
Oh! such a son have I in training for you,
Arm'd with a two-edg'd tongue that cuts o' both sides,
The stay, support, and pillar of my house,
The scourge of my tormentors, the redeemer
Of a most wretched father—Call him forth,

Call him, I say, and let my eyes feast on him—
What hoa! My son, my boy—Your father calls;
Come forth and show yourself. [*To them Pheidip.*

Socr. Behold him present!

Streps. My dear—my darling—

Socr. Lo! you have your darling.

Streps. Joy, joy, my son! all joy—for now you wear
A face of a right character and cast,
A wrangling, quibbling, contradicting face;
Now you have got it neatly on the tongue—
The very quirk o' th' time—"What's that you say?
What is it?"—Shifting from yourself the wrong
To him that suffers it—an arch conceit
To make a transfer of iniquity,
When it has serv'd your turn—Yes, you will pass;
You've the right[1] Attic stamp upon your forehead.
Now let me see a sample of your service,
Forsooth to say you owe me a good turn.

Pheidip. What vexes you, my father?

Streps. What! the moon,
This day both new and old.

Pheidip. Both in one day?
Ridiculous!

Streps. No matter—'Tis the day
Will bring my creditors upon my back
All in a swarm together.

Pheidip. Let them swarm!
We'll smother 'em if they dare so to miscall
One day as two days.[2]

[1] The Athenians, says Wieland, were so well aware of the advantages which their wit, their volubility of tongue, and their higher cultivation gave them over other Greeks, and particularly over their neighbours, the Bœotians, the Megarians, and the islanders of the Ægean and Ionian seas, that this self-consciousness actually impressed itself on their features, and produced a sort of bold, confident, shameless look, by which an Athenian citizen was easily distinguished from a stranger. "What's that you say?" was an expression in common use at Athens—not for the purpose of "shifting wrong from the doer to the sufferer,"—but merely to display Athenian superiority and to let a stranger know that his answers were very dull to Athenian ears.

[2] Before the commencement of a trial in Athens, both parties deposited a certain sum of money with the magistrate who entered their cause into the court. This deposit went finally to the payment of persons attending the courts; the losing party also being obliged, beside the payment of other charges, to restore the deposit-money to his adversary. Pheidip-

Streps. What should hinder them?
Pheidip. What, do you ask? Can the same woman be
Both young and old at once?
Streps. They speak by law:
The statute bears them out.
Pheidip. But they misconstrue
The spirit of the statute.
Streps. What's that?
Pheidip. Time-honour'd Solon was the people's friend—
Streps. This makes not to the case of new or old.
Pheidip. And he appointed two days for the process,
The old and new day—for citation that,
This for discharge—
Streps. Why did he name two days?
Pheidip. Why, but that one might warn men of their debts,
The other serve them to escape the payment;
Else were they laid by th' heels, as sure as fate,
On the new moon ensuing.
Streps. Wherefore then
Upon the former day do they commence
Their doles of first fruits [1] at the Prytaneum,
And not at the new moon?
Pheidip. Because, forsooth,
They're hungry feeders, and make haste to thrust
Their greedy fingers in the public dish.
Streps. Hence then, ye witless creditors, begone!
We are the wise ones, we are the true sort;
Ye are [2] but blocks, mob, cattle, empty casks—
" Therefore with ecstasy I'll raise
My jocund voice in fortune's praise,

pides, playing upon a term in the Athenian calendar, by which one and the same day was made to appear like two days, derives from it a proof of Solon's affection for the democracy. According to him, Solon's appointment of the two days, new and old, for a legal summons, was, that by that means, the deposit-money might be taken on the new moon, the old day being added for the purpose of giving the contending parties a previous opportunity of settling matters amicably. Why then, asks Strepsiades, continuing the quibble, do the magistrates receive the deposit-money on the new-moon, and not on the old and new day? Because, replies the son, " they're hungry feeders," etc.

[1] The Translator has confounded Prytaneia (the deposit-money mentioned in the preceding note) with Prytaneum, the stadhaus or town-hall of Athens.

[2] Strepsiades, in the common manner of the Greek stage, applies these terms to the audience, and not to his creditors.

And, oh rare son!—Oh happy me!
The burden of my song shall be;
For hark! each passing neighbour cries—
All hail, Strepsiades the wise!
Across the forum as I walk,
I and my son the public talk,
All striving which shall have to boast
He prais'd me first, or prais'd me most—
And now, my son, my welcome guest,
Enter my house and grace my feast." [*Exeunt.*

PASIAS, *and a Witness.*

Pasias.[1] Should this man be permitted to go on
At such a desperate rate? It must not be.
Better for him to have brok'n up at once
Than to be thus beset. Therefore it is
That I am forc'd upon this hostile course,
Empowering you to summon this my debtor
For the recovery of my own—Good sooth,
I will not put my country to the blush,
But I must rouse Strepsiades—

STREPSIADES *re-enters.*

Streps. Who's this?
Pasias. The old and new day call upon you, sir.
Streps. (*to the spectators*). Bear witness that this man has nam'd two days—
And for what debt do you assail me thus?
Pasias. For twelve good pounds that you took up at interest
To pay for your son's racer.
Streps. I a racer?
Do you not hear him? Can you not all witness
How mortally and from my soul I hate
All the whole racing calendar?

[1] The sense is very obscure here. Pasias enters, addressing himself to his accompanying witness, and the sum of his reasoning is as follows: "What, shall a man lose his own (for the sake of pleasing others)? Let it not be thought of. Better had it been to have put a good front upon the matter at first, and have said 'no,' than to have been put to all this trouble. Self-defence, however, obliges me to take another course. Therefore it is," etc.

Pasias. What then?
You took the gods to witness you would pay me.
Streps. I grant you, in my folly I did swear,
But then my son had not attain'd the art
Of the new logic unconfutable.
Pasias. And have you now the face to stand it out
Against all evidence?
Streps. Assuredly—
Else how am I the better for my schooling?
Pasias. And dare you, knowing it to be a falsehood,
Take the great gods to witness to your oath,
When I shall put it to you?
Streps. What great gods?
Pasias. (*starting at the question*). Mercurius, Neptune, Jupiter himself—
Streps. Yes, and stake down three-farthings as a handsel
That I will take the oath, so help me Jove!
Pasias. Insolent wretch, you'll perish in your folly!
Streps. Oh! that this madman was well scrubb'd with salt
To save his brains from addling!
Pasias. Out upon't!
Do you make game of me?
Streps. —I warrant me
He'll take at least six gallons for a dressing.
Pasias. So may great Jove and all the gods deal with me
As I will handle you for this buffoonery!
Streps. I thank you for your gods—They're pleasant fellows—
And for your Jupiter, the learn'd and wise
Hold him a very silly thing to swear by.
Pasias. 'Tis well, rash man, 'tis well! The time will come
When you shall wish these vaunting words unsaid:
But will you pay the debt or will you not?
Say, and dismiss me.
Streps. Set your mind at rest;
You shall have satisfaction in a twinkling— [*Steps aside.*
Pasias. What think you of this chap?
Witness. That he will pay you.

STREPSIADES *returns.*

Streps. Where is this dun of mine? Come hither, friend,
How do you call this thing?

Pasias. A kneading-trough,
Or, as we say, a cardopus—
Streps. Go to!
Dost think I'll pay my money to a blockhead,
That calls this kneading-trough a *cardopus?*
I tell you, man, it is a *cardopa*—
Go, go, you will not get a doit from me,
You and your *cardopus.*
Pasias. Will you not pay me?
Steps. Assure yourself I will not—Hence, begone!
Will you not beat your march, and quit my doors?
Pasias. I'm gone, but take this with you, if I live
I'll sue you in the Prytaneum [1] before night.
Streps. You'll lose your suit, and your twelve pounds besides.
I'm sorry for your loss, but who can help it?
You may ev'n thank your cardopus for that.

[*Exit Pasias and Witness.*

AMYNIAS *enters, followed by a Witness.*

Amynias. Ah me, ah me!
Streps. Who's that with his—Ah me?
Whom has *Carcinus* [2] sent amongst us now—
Which of his doleful deities?—
Amynias. Alas!
Would you know who I am? Know then I am
A wretch made up of woes—
Streps. A woeful wretch—
Granted! pass on.
Amynias. Oh [3] inauspicious chance!
Oh ye hard-hearted, chariot-breaking fates!
Oh! Pallas my destroyer, what a crash
Is this that you have giv'n me!

[1] The word Prytaneia has again led the translator into an error. The threat of Pasias implies that he will commence the first stage of a process by laying down the gage-money.

[2] He glances at Carcinus (by the way, the translator is incorrect in his quantity; the penultima of Carcinus being short), a very voluminous tragic writer, to the amount of 160 dramas. He introduced some of the immortals in ridiculous situations, using the like doleful expressions as he puts here into the mouth of the money-lender.

[3] These lines appear to be a parody upon some tragedy, in which Tlepolemus, one of the sons of Hercules, apparently gave occasion to some character in the piece to utter a similar exclamation.

Streps. Hah! what ails you?
Of what can you accuse Tlepolemus?
Amynias. Mock not my miseries, but bid your son
Repay what he has borrow'd.
Steps. Take me with you—
What should my son repay?
Amynias. The sum I lent him.
Streps. Is that it? Then your case is desperate;
Truly you're out of luck.
Amynias. I'm out of everything—
I overthrew my chariot—By the gods
That's being *out*, I take it, with a vengeance.
Streps. Say rather you are kick'd by an ass [1]—a trifle!
Amynias. But, sir, my lawful money is no trifle;
I shall not choose to be kick'd out of that.
Streps. I'll tell you what you are—Out of your wits.
Amynias. How so?
Streps. Because your brain [2] seems wondrous leaky.
Amynias. Look to't! By Mercury, I'll clap you up,
If you don't pay me.
Streps. Hark'ye, one short question—
When Jove rains on us does he rain fresh water,
Or only vapours that the sun exhales?
Answer me that.
Amynias. I care not what he rains;
I trouble not my cap with such conceits.
Streps. And do you think a man, that has no wit
To argue upon these rare points, will argue me
Out of my money?
Amynias. Let your debt go on,
And pay me up the interest.
Streps. What is that?
What kind of thing is that same interest?
Amynias. A thing it is that grows from day to day,
And month to month, swelling as time rolls on
To a round sum of money.

[1] There is a play upon words in the original, which is not possible to transfuse into the translation. It consists in the nice inflexion of voice, by which απ' ονου and απο νου would be confounded together.

[2] It may not be amiss to mention that Aristophanes, alluding to the brain, uses a word (εγκεφαλου) which, from Grecian notions of delicacy, was generally avoided, and a periphrasis used instead.

Streps. Well defin'd!
One question more—What think you of the sea?
Is it not fuller now than heretofore?
Amynias. No, by the Gods! not fuller, but as full:
That is my judgment of it.
Streps. Oh thou miser!
That so would'st stint the ocean, and yet cram
Thy swelling coffers till they overflow—
Fetch me a whip, that I may lash him hence:
Take to your heels—begone!
Amynias. I will convoke
My witnesses against you.
Streps. Start! set off!—
Away! you jennet, you!
Amynias. (*to the spectators*). Is not this outrage?
Streps. (*smacking his whip*). Will you not bolt? will you not buckle kindly
Into your geers, or must I mount and goad you
Under the crupper, till you kick and wince
For very madness? Oho! Are you off?
A welcome riddance—All the devils drive
You and your cursed chariot hence together!
[*Strepsiades goes into his house.*
Manet Chorus. "Mark here how rarely it succeeds
To build our trust on guilty deeds:
Mark how this old cajoling elf,
Who sets a trap to catch himself,
Falsely believes he has found the way
To hold his creditors at bay.
Too late he'll curse the Sophists' school,
That taught his son to cheat by rule,
And train'd the modest lips of youth
In the vile art of torturing truth;
A modern logic much in use,
Invented for the law's abuse;
A subtle knack of spying flaws
To cast in doubt the clearest cause,
Whereby, in honesty's despite,
The wrong side triumphs o'er the right—
Alas! short triumph he must have,
Who glories that his son's a knave:

Ah foolish sire, the time will come
You'll wish that son of your's were dumb."

STREPSIADES (*rushing out of the house, in great confusion, followed by his son*) PHEIDIPPIDES, CHORUS.

Streps. Hoa there! What hoa! for pity's sake some help!
Friends, kinsmen, countrymen! turn out and help!
Oh! my poor head, my cheeks are bruis'd to jelly—
Help by all means!—Why, thou ungracious cub,
Thy father wouldst thou beat?
Pheidip. Assuredly.
Streps. There, there! he owns that he would beat his father.
Pheidip. I own it, good my father!
Streps. Parricide!
Impious assassin! Sacrilegious wretch!
Pheidip. All, all, and more—You cannot please me better;
I glory in these attributes. Go on!
Streps. Monster of turpitude!
Pheidip. Crown me with roses!
Streps. Wretch, will you strike your parent?
Pheidip. Piously,
And will maintain the right, by which I do it.
Streps. Oh shameless villain! can there be a right
Against all nature so to treat a father?
Pheidip. That I shall soon make clear to your conviction.
Streps. You, you convince me?
Pheidip. With the greatest ease:
And I can work the proof two several ways;
Therefore make choice between them.
Streps. What do you mean?
Pheidip. I mean to say we argue up or down—
Take which you like. It comes to the same end.
Streps. Aye, and a precious end you've brought it to,
If all my care of you must end in this,
That I have put you in the way to beat me,
(Which is a thing unnatural and profane)
And after justify it.
Pheidip. That I'll do.
By process clear and categorical,
That you shall fairly own yourself a convert

To a most wholesome cudgelling.
Streps. Come on!
Give me your arguments—but spare your blows.
Chorus. How to restrain this headstrong son of your's
Behoves you now, old man, to find the means,
For sure he could not be thus confident
Without some cause; something there needs must be,
Some strong possession of himself within,
That buoys him up to this high pitch of daring,
This bold assumption; which that we may know,
Give us distinctively the whole detail
From first to last whence this contention sprang,
So shall we hear, and hearing judge betwixt you.
Streps. So please you then I will the cause unfold
Of this base treatment to your patient ears,
And thus it stands—When we had supp'd together,
As you all know, in friendly sort, I bade him
Take up his lute and give me the good song
Of old Simonides,[1]—" the ram was shorn; "—
But he directly scouted my request—
It was a fashion out of date forsooth—
He would not sit twanging the lute, not he;
'Twas not for him to cackle o'er his wine,
As if he were some wench working the hand-mill [2]—
'Twas vulgar and unseemly—
Pheidip. Grossly so;
And was it not high time that I should beat you,
Who had no better manners than to set
Your guest a chirping like a grasshopper?
Streps. These were his very words, and more than these;
For by and by he told me that Simonides

[1] The nature of the *Scolia* or drinking-songs of the Athenians may be seen in the comedy of the *Wasps*.

[2] Alluding to the ballads sung by women whilst at work upon the hand-mill. The names of several of these may be found in Hesychius and Athenæus. One of the simplest is preserved in Ælian, lib. vii. c. 4. It bore the name of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and King of Mitylene, who, according to Plutarch, took a peculiar pleasure in grinding his own corn and making his own bread. The women at their mills did not, of course, forget so honourable a testimony to their craft.

Grind, grind, good my mill, grind;
Pittacus turns a mill as we all find.
Grind, grind, good my mill, grind,
This miller-king, oh he's the man to my mind.

Was a most paltry poet. This you'll own
Was a tough morsel, yet I gulp'd it down,
And pass'd it off with bidding him recite
Some passage out of Æschylus, withal
Tendering a myrtle [1] wreath, as custom is,
To grace the recitation—He forsooth,
Flouting my tender, instantly replied—
" I hold your Æschylus, of all our poets,
First of the spouters, incoherent, harsh,
Precipitous and turgid."—Oh my friends,
Was not this more than flesh and blood should bear?
Yet, yet I smother'd rage within my heart,
And calmly said—" Call something else to mind
More to your taste and from some modern bard,
So it be good withal and worth the hearing—"
Whereat, would you believe it? he began
Repeating from Euripides—Great Jove,
Guard my chaste ears from such another dose!
A perilous long-winded tale of incest
'Twixt son and daughter of the same sad mother.[2]
Sick to the soul I spurn'd at such declaiming,
Adding, as well I might, all that my scorn
Of such vile trash could add! till, to be short,
Words begat words, and blows too as it prov'd,
For leaping from his seat he sprung upon me,
Struck, buffeted, and bang'd me out of measure,
Throttled me, pounded me well nigh to dust—

Pheidip. And what less does that heretic deserve.
Who will not praise Euripides, the first [3]
In wisdom of all poets?

Streps. He the first!
How my tongue itches!—but the rogue is ready;
He'll beat me if I answer.

Pheidip. And with reason.

Streps. What reason, graceless cub, will bear you out

[1] When any poems, sacred to the deity, such as those of a dramatic kind, were recited at private tables, the person reciting held a branch of laurel (myrtle) in his hand, to signify that he was performing an act of devotion as well as amusement.

[2] The story of Macareus the son of Æolus, and his uterine sister Canace.

[3] This high admiration for Euripides had, of course, been learnt in the school of Socrates, whose regard for that poet and his tragedies is well known.

For beating me, who in your baby age
Caress'd you, dandled you upon my knee,
Watch'd every motion, humour'd all your wants?
Then if you lisp'd a syllable I caught it—
Bryn cried the bantling—strait I gave you drink:
Mamman it mew'd—and that forsooth was bread:
Nay, I perform'd the nurse's dirtiest task,
And held you out before me at your needs;
And now in my necessity you show'd
No mercy to the pressing calls of nature,
But having pummel'd me till my poor bowels
Could hold no longer, kept me fast imprison'd
To struggle with occasion as I could.

Chor. Now every young man's heart beats an alarm,
Anxious to hear his advocate's appeal;
Which if he can establish, the same right
By him asserted will on all devolve,
And beating then will be so much in vogue
That old men's skins will be reduc'd to cobwebs—
Now you, that hold up this new paradox,
Look well how you defend it, for it asks
No trivial reasons to enforce persuasion.

Pheidip. Now gratefully the mind receives new lights,
Emerging from the shades of prejudice,
And casting old establishments aside!
Time was but now, when every thought of mine
Was centred in the stable; then I had not
Three words upon my tongue without a stumble;
But now, since I've been put into the way
Of knowing better things, and the fine art
Of subtle disputation, I am bold
To meet this question, and convince my hearers
How right it is to punish this old sinner.

Streps. Mount, mount your chariot! Oh, that I could see you
Seated again behind your favourite horses,
Tho' 'twere with four in hand, so that you kept
From driving me at such a pelting rate.

Pheidip. Now then I ask you, gathering up my thread
Where it was broken off, if you, my father,
When I was but a stripling, spar'd my back?

Streps. No, for I studied all things for your good,

And therefore I corrected you.
Pheidip. Agreed.
I also am like studious of your good,
And therefore I most lovingly correct you;
If beating be a proof of love, you have it
Plenteous in measure, for by what exemption
Is your most sacred carcass freed from stripes
And mine made subject to them? Am not I
Free-born as you? Say, if the son's in tears,
Should not the father weep?
Streps. By what one rule
Of equity?
Pheidip. What equity were that
If none but children are to be chastis'd ?
And grant they were, the proverb's in your teeth,
Which says old age is but a second childhood.
Again, if tears are seen to follow blows,
Ought not old men to expiate faults with tears
Rather than children, who have more to plead
In favour of their failings?
Streps. Where's the law
That warrants this proceeding? There's none such.
Pheidip. And what was your law-maker but a man,
Mortal as you and I are? And tho' time
Has sanctified his statutes, may not I
Take up the cause of youth, as he of age,
And publish a new ordinance for leave
By the right-filial to correct our fathers,
Remitting and consigning to oblivion
All *ex post facto* beating? Look at instinct—
Inquire of nature how the brute creation
Kick at their parents, which in nothing differ
From lordly man, except that they compile
No laws, and hold their rights without a statute.
Streps. If you are thus for pecking at your father
Like a young fighting-cock, why don't you peck
Your dinner from the dunghill, and at night
Roost on a perch?
Pheidip. The cases do not tally,
Nor does my master Socrates prescribe
Rules so absurd.

Streps. Cease then from beating me;
Else you preclude yourself.
Pheidip. As how preclude?
Streps. Because the right I have of beating you
Will be your right in time over your son,
When you shall have one.
Pheidip. But if I have none,
All my sad hours are lost, and you die laughing.
Streps. There's no denying that.—How say you, sirs?
Methinks there is good matter in his plea;
And as for us old sinners, truth to say,
If we deserve a beating we must bear it.
Pheidip. Hear me—there's more to come—
Streps. Then I am lost,
For I can bear no more.
Pheidip. Oh fear it not,
Rather believe what I have now to tell you
Will cause you to make light of what is past,
'Twill bring such comfort to you.
Streps. Let me have it:
If it be comfort, give it me.
Pheidip. Then know,
Henceforth I am resolv'd to beat my mother
As I have beaten you.
Streps. How say you? How?
Why this were to out-do all you have done.
Pheidip. But what if I have not a proof *in petto*,
To show the moral uses of this beating?
Streps. Show me a proof that you have hang'd yourself,
And with your tutor Socrates beside you
Gone to the devil together in a string;
Those moral uses I will thank you for—
Oh inauspicious goddesses, O Clouds!
In you confiding, all these woes fall on me.
Chor. Evil events from evil causes spring,
And what you suffer flows from what you've done.
Streps. Why was I not forewarn'd? You saw me old,
And practis'd on my weak simplicity.
Chor. 'Tis not for us to warn a wilful sinner;
We stay him not, but let him run his course,
Till by misfortunes rous'd, his conscience wakes,

And prompts him to appease th' offended gods.
Streps. I feel my sorrows, but I own them just:
Yes, ye reforming Clouds, I'm duly punish'd
For my intended fraud.—And now, my son,
Join hands with me and let us forth together
To wreak our vengeance on those base deceivers,
That Chærephon and Socrates the chief,
Who have cajol'd us both.
Pheidip. Grace forbid
I should lift up my hand against my masters!
Streps. Nay, nay, but rather dread avenging Jove,
God of your ancestors,[1] and him revere.
Pheidip. You're mad, methinks, to talk to me of Jove—
Is there a god so call'd?
Streps. There is! there is!
Pheidip. There is no Jupiter, I tell you so;
Vortex has whirl'd him from his throne, and reigns
By right of conquest in the Thunderer's place.
Streps. 'Tis false, no Vortex reigns but in my brain.
Pheidip. Laugh at your own dull joke and be a fool! [*Exit.*
Streps. (*striking his breast*). Insufferable blockhead that I was;
What ail'd me thus to court this Socrates,
Ev'n to the exclusion of the immortal gods?
O Mercury, forgive me; be not angry,
Dear tutelary god, but spare me still,
And cast a pitying eye upon my follies,
For I have been intemperate of tongue,
And dearly rue it—Oh my better genius,
Inspire me with thy counsel how to act,
Whether by legal process to assail them,
Or by such apter means as thou may'st dictate,
I have it! Well hast thou inspir'd the thought;
Hence with the lazy law; thou art not for it.
With fire and faggot I will fall upon them,
And send their school *in fumo* to the Clouds.
Hoa, Xanthias (*calling to one of his slaves*), hoa! bring forth without delay
Your ladder and your mattock, mount the roof,

[1] The Zeus Patrous of the original was not properly a deity of the Athenians: the title Patrous belonged exclusively to Apollo. The answer of Pheidippides, in the original, refers primarily to this mistake.

Break up the rafters, whelm the house upon them,
And bury the whole hive beneath the ruins.
[*Xanthias mounts the roof and begins working with his mattock.*
Haste! if you love me, haste! Oh, for a torch,
A blazing torch new lighted, to set fire
To the infernal edifice.—I warrant me
I'll soon unhouse the rascals, that now carry
Their heads so high, and roll them in the dust.
[*One of the scholars comes out.*

First Disciple. Woe! mischief! misery!
Streps. (*mounts the roof and fixes a torch to the joists*).
Torch, play your part:
And we shall muster up a conflagration.
First Disciple. What are you doing, fellow?
Streps. Chopping logic;
Arguing a knotty point with your house-beams.
Second Disciple. Oh horror! Who has set our house on fire?
Streps. The very man whose cloak you nabb'd so neatly.
Second Disciple. Undone and ruin'd—!
Streps. Heartily I wish it—
And mean you should so be if this same mattock
Does not deceive my hopes, and I escape
With a whole neck.

SOCRATES *comes forth.*

Socr. Hoa there! What man is that?
You there upon the roof—what are you doing?
Streps. Treading on air—contemplating the sun—
Socr. Ah me! I'm suffocated, smother'd, lost—

CHÆREPHON *appears.*

Chærephon. Wretch that I am, I'm melted, scorch'd, consum'd—
Streps. Blasphemers, why did you insult the gods?
Dash, drive, demolish them! Their crimes are many,
But their contemptuous treatment of the gods,
Their impious blasphemies, exceed them all.
Chor. Break up!—The Chorus have fulfill'd their part.

THE WASPS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SOSIAS, XANTHIAS, *Two Slaves.*
PHILOCLEON, *an Athenian Dicast.*
BDELYCLEON, *son of Philocleon.*
CHORUS, *Athenian Dicasts, habited as Wasps.*
Dog Plaintiff.
Dog Defendant (*Labes*).

SCENE—Athens.

THE WASPS

SCENE.—*A private House, the Room opening upon the Street is covered with Nets.* TIME, *an Hour or two before Day-break. Two Slaves,* XANTHIAS and SOSIAS, *stand as Guards before the Door.* SOSIAS *finds his Companion inclining to Sleep.*

Sos. Why, Xanthias, my toy (*shakes him*), why what ails the poor boy!
some infection upon him is creeping—
Xant. These eyes (*rubbing them*) so much ache, that (*yawns*) a lesson they take
in the (*yawns*) sweet little science of sleeping.
Sos. Keep a guard on them yet, or thou'lt score up a debt,
whose payment will lie in the skin:
Hast thou yet, boy, to know what the service we owe,
on the beast we keep guarded within?
Xant. I have neither to learn, but (*yawns*) excuse t'other turn,
for these eyes are incontinent winking.
Sos. (*rubbing his own eyes*). Then their pleasure e'en do, for my peepers too
feel a sort of delectable blinking.
Xant. (*rousing up*). This is phrenzy, or—worse—'tis the wake-sleepy [1] curse—
Sos. (*yawns*). Rather say the God, last put in motion,[2]

[1] This disease of sleeping with the eyes open, known among the Greeks by the term κορυβαντιᾶν, forms one of the properties of Rabelais' allegorical Shrove-tide. Travailloit, rien ne faisant, rien ne faisoit travaillant, Corybantoit dormant, dormoit Corybantiant, les yeux ouverts, comme font les lievres de Champagne, craignant quelque camisade d'andouilles ses antiques ennemis.

[2] The god here meant is the Sabazian Bacchus. A law in Athens prohibited the introduction of any foreign divinity or mode of worship without a decree of the Areiopagus: this law in later times became neglected, and the gods of Thrace, of Phrygia, and other barbarous countries became incorporated with those of Athens. This is one among many other sarcasms directed by the comic writers against the introduction of these strange divinities, and the nightly ceremonies which were held in their honour.

Has bid the pest come—
Xant. (*rubbing*). Then the God, smite me dumb,
has two converts (*yawns*) of wondrous devotion.
For oh! this short rest on my senses it prest
such a lethargy—nay no derision—
Like a Mede in his might,[1] it quite master'd my sight,
and I've seen a most marvellous vision.
Sos. What, my lad, are you there? Why then two make a pair:
at a vision I'll beat you quite hollow:
(*Affecting terror*) Such another I bar—but I give you the *pas*,
tell your tale, and my own quick shall follow.
Xant. Methought then I saw (and my breath I scarce draw
while I think of its size and dimension),
An eagle repair to the Agora and there
grasp a shield with most violent tension.
The shield made its prize, it bore back to the skies,
its flight into darkness pursuing;
Yet the shield, lad, was found, all at once on the ground,
as though 'twere Cleonymus' doing.
Sos. Cleonymus then is a puzzle [2] confest,
And " read me this riddle, expound me this jest "
(Thus at feast and at wine 'twill be ask'd of each guest),
" There's a beast—tell me what—the deep ocean it plies,
It creeps on the earth and it mounts to the skies,
Yet in ocean or heaven, in brake or in field,
Something ever it drops and that something's a shield! "
Xant. (*despondingly*). The worse luck for me, such a sight who must see;
some evil, I'm sure, will come on it:
Sos. Throw hard thoughts to the wind, and for fright, prithee mind,
you may doff, boy, as quick as you don it.
Xant. Yet that one who writes man, should adopt such a plan!—
cast his shield!—no: I never can brave it.
But my ears would regale in their turn on your tale,
Sos. And truly, my chick, thou shalt have it.

[1] This is said, affecting terror. Till the battle of Marathon, the very name of a Mede, as Herodotus honestly confesses (*Erato*, c. 112), excited terror in Greece.

[2] At the convivial entertainments of the ancients, no diversion was more usual than that of propounding and answering difficult questions.

But its size, pray first learn:—poop to prow—stem to stern,
(*with importance*) the whole vessel of state, man, is in it:
Xant. So all safe's in the hold,[1] to the rest I'm quite cold:
but your story—my ears fain would win it.
Sos. 'Twas, observe, my first sleep, when methought all with sheep
the Pnyx fill'd—and these reverend wethers
Like our parliament-men had their staff [2] and their cane,
with a cloak duly tuck'd round their nethers.
These sheep, fellow mine, taking seat did incline
to a Whale,[3] who was holding oration;
Wide and deep was the throat, and its voice had the note
of a sow with a large corporation.
Xant. (*holding his nose*). As you love me, no more—
Sos. Why what now?
Xant. I implore—
pah! I scarce can keep body together,
There's a steam and a stench in the dream—
Sos. Of a drench?
Xant. No: of cows' hides and vile rotten leather.
Sos. This damnable Whale, having done with his tale,
prick'd a Bull [4] by a scale—nothing mincing—
Xant. Lookye there now he tried, how thick Johnny Bull's hide,
and what he could bear without wincing.
Sos. By this Whale's very side sat Theorus's pride,—
a sight to astonish beholders—
For his seat was quite low; and for head a large crow
had perch'd on the top of his shoulders.
Alcibiades straight turns to me, quite elate,
and pointing his hand at the raven:

[1] The usual place for slaves on board ship.
[2] The usual costume of the lower Athenians, when they attended the Ecclesia or General Assembly.
[3] The whale represents Cleon.
[4] In the original the whale (Cleon) is represented as holding a pair of scales. The poet then plays on the term *Demus*, which, according to the position of its accent, signifies, in the Greek language, either *bulls' fat* or *the people;* and on two words nearly similar in sound, of which one signifies to *weigh* and the other to *separate*. By this play of words the poet exposes the art of Cleon, whose policy it had been two years before to divide the people among themselves, and thus prevent them from accepting the offers of peace made by the Lacedemonians. Our national habits enable us to give something like an equivalent for the original.

(*imitates stammering*) " L'ookee, there by my f'ay " (you know what his way)
" the f'latterer's turn'd to a c'raven." [1]
Xant. Let him stumble or stammer—by the lord now the hammer
hit the nail's very head there I trow, boy:
Sos. But a word for your ear—is it no cause of fear
that Theorus should turn to a crow, boy?
Xant. Not the least.
Sos. Nay discuss, how dost prove it?
Xant. E'en thus:
Theorus—pray mark my precision—
Was a man—
Sos. Even so:
Xant. This man turns to a crow—
Sos. And what argues my learned logician?
Xant. From wise sayings and saws this conclusion he draws,
that Theorus once dead—the vile sinner—
His limbs will be *there* (*points to the ground*) while his head in the air (*points upwards*)
from a pole finds the ravens a dinner.
Sos. Now buss me, boy, do; and these obols,—they're two—
take for this thy most learn'd exposition.[2]
Xant. But 'tis time that I say, what the theme of our play,
dropping first though a short admonition.
(*Turns to the spectators*) Gentle sirs, for whom we live, let none present here pray give
to expectance and hope too large warrant;
Nor do courtesy so small as to think his taste shall pall
on stol'n trash such as Megara [3] sees current.
We've no slave nor serving man, who from basket or from pan
scatters nuts [4] to the greedy spectators;

[1] The charge insinuated against Theorus in the text is flattery. To preserve the play of words another blow has been added to the original. Alcibiades' defect of speech has been recorded by several authors.

[2] Among a people so superstitious as the Greeks, an expounder of dreams, or, as he was termed, an oneiro-critic, claimed no small share of importance.

[3] Some of the earliest farces owed their birth to Susarion, a native of this place (Aristotle in *Poeticis*, § 5). From the specimens we have of Athenian comedy, it will easily be imagined that the Megarians were not very nice in their taste or delicate in their mirth.

[4] The smaller poets used to court the favour of the audience and endeavour to promote mirth by little largesses of this kind.

No Hercules who talks of short commons or who balks
for the joke's sake his keen masticators.
Euripides' muse, let her frisk it as she choose,
unassail'd shall henceforward disport her;
And Cleon, tho' of late he's grown hand and glove with fate,
is no subject just now for our mortar.
Yet your hearing to regale we've a merry little tale,
(under favour, I speak what most scarce is),
Though below the critic pit, yet it strains at higher wit,
than the run of our general farces.
Its tenor would you know?—first your eyes, sirs, upward throw—
to yon roof—we've a master there sleeping;
Himself a man of mark, though his dad, poor fellow's stark,
and needs vigilant duress and keeping.
That he wander not at large is a strict and solemn charge—
to us twain by the son late imparted—
For the roughest might admire, how this sickness of his sire
he mourns and deplores heavy-hearted.
And sure never came a disease with such a name
under notice of surgeon or college;
With *Phil* it begins—but the rest no one wins—
guess and try and you'll find it past knowledge.[1]
You Amynias there—hist!—(*affects to listen attentively*) a
Philocubist?[2]— *Sos.* Miss'd:
Xant. No, he loves not the dice-box so dearly;
But the sons of Pronapus[3]— *Sos.* Oft jape us—and the ape
has here nam'd his own malady clearly.
Xant. Pretty Sosias I hear whisper Dercylus near,
(*mimics*) *the fellow 'tis clear loves hard drinking;*
Sos. But Sosias is nice, nor knows drinking's the vice—

[1] The reader must prepare himself for the most extravagant caricature in this and the following scene; but he is ill-versed in Aristophanes and the politics of Athens, if he thinks this caricature derived from anything but the most profound judgment. The very essence of the Athenian democracy, as both Aristotle and Demosthenes allow, was centered in its Dicasteria, or courts of justice, and the poet had to throw his audience completely off their guard, before he dared meddle with so dangerous a topic.

[2] A lover of dice.

[3] The translator has taken advantage of this word being a proper name, to give the penultima that quantity which suited his own verse rather than the canons of the comic Iambic Senarius.

Xant. of all sound [1] honest men to my thinking,
And Nicostratus trips, for I see that his lips
to themselves are Phil'oxenist [2] framing;
Sos. And that never will do, for Philoxenus—whuh!
'tis a wretch that should die for the naming.
Xant. But to leave as befits, gents, this strain of your wits,
which will bear but a sorry conclusion;—
Just your chatt'ring forbear for a while, and you'll hear
what his malady, phrenzy, delusion.
He's a PHIL-HE-LI-ASS: [3] (*a loud roar of laughter*) bravo: let the joke pass:
yes: his humour, scope, taste, and fruition
Are a seat at the bar, with the charms of wood-war,
a vote, and judicial decision.
Of these still he thinks—ne'er in sleep his sense sinks,
or if a stray wink he is snatching
'Tis but meal-dust and motes, and his mind the while floats
in the courts o'er the water-glass [4] watching.
When the morn sees him sped first from tester and bed,
'tis with three fingers [5] close in compression;
Not because the Moon's new, [6] and the censer's claim due,
but—the Dicasts so use them at Session.
Sees he wall, post, or door, chalk'd and scribbl'd all o'er,
Long life to the fair charming DAMUS! [7]
He effaces the D, and cries, marking a C,
Live for ever my own darling CAMUS! [8]

[1] The poet, who in another place calls wine "the milk of Venus," and who, according to Plato, was equally devoted to the service of the goddess of love and the god of wine, no doubt delivers his own opinion here, in which he would be backed by the greatest part of his audience.

[2] A lover of hospitality towards strangers.

[3] A lover of the high court of justice, called Heliæa.

[4] Used in courts of justice for regulating the time of an orator's speech.

[5] The sea-shell or bean, by which the dicasts gave their votes, was held between the fore-finger, the middle-finger, and the thumb. This was done to prevent them from casting more than one shell into the urn which received the judicial votes.

[6] At New Moon incense was offered to the statues of the gods; and from the Scholiast it appears that the rite was practised in the same way as casting the judiciary shells into the urns.

[7] He that writes sentences on a wall, says a Spanish proverb, has wind in his pole. It was probably the volatile, unsteady character of the Athenians, which made them so much delight in this practice. The exquisite beauty of the young person in the text, whose name has been altered from Demus to Damus, is warmly commended by Plato.

[8] The tunnel, through which the dicasts passed their shells or beans into the judicial urns.

Once the cock crowing late, a strange thought cross'd his pate:
" *the bird had been brib'd, a base minion,*
That Accounts might be passed snug and safe, and all fast without an official opinion."
Scarce the last meal is done, than he shouts out anon,
" my boots, boy! "—then off to court trudging,
He claps head 'gainst a rail, and sticks there like a snail
till the morn bids his worship be budging.
Of the two lines [1] in law, sure his fingers to draw
the long, which marks death and perdition;
And the wax from this trick to his nails hangs so thick,
a bee's load would be light in addition.
As our suffrages tell in the courts by a shell,
lest the means should e'er fail him of voting,
He has robb'd the sea-shore, and has hiv'd such a store
as would give a large shingle its coating.
Thus his mind's strangely crost—and he raves tempest-tost,
neither nostrum nor physic can cure him;
These but make matters worse—the sole help for his curse
is, that four solid walls safe ensure him.
So we bolt and we bar him—flight and egress we mar him;
for the son views with deep consternation
This paternal distraction, and alike speech and action
hath tried for his mind's restoration.
First 'twas " *Father, your ear—pray that mantle cashier — and your cloak why, sir, wear dicast-fashion—*
And if you could stay just within for a day "—
'twas preaching to th' seas in their passion.

[1] In every Athenian court of justice were placed two urns. Of these, one made of brass, assumed the three several names of, the *former urn*, the *valid urn*, and the *urn of death*. The first appellation was derived from its relative position, and the second from its determining the validity of the accusation; the third requires no explanation. Another urn, made of wood, was placed *behind* the brazen urn, into which were thrown the shells that acquitted the prisoner. For these several reasons it assumed the names of the *hinder urn*, the *invalid urn*, and the *urn of mercy*.—When all the shells had been given in, these urns were opened, and the suffrages numbered in presence of the proper magistrate. This person stood with a rod in his hand, which he laid over the shells or beans as they were numbered, lest any should be omitted through treachery and mistake, or any counted twice over. If the number of *black* beans or shells was greatest, the magistrate pronounced the person guilty; and to denote his condemnation he drew *a long line* on a table lined with wax; on the contrary, if the *white* beans exceeded or merely equalled the number of the black, the magistrate drew a *short* line in token of the prisoner's acquittal.

We tried baths and lustrations [1]—then his hallucinations
might yield to pipe,[2] timbrel, and viol;
He turns short, ere half's done, drops the New Court upon
and instantly calls up a trial.
This failing we're sailing to Ægina, where ailing
cures by scaling and pailing and drenches:
There the night finds him fast, ere next morn seas are past,
and he, blithe as bee, on the benches.
To the house we confine him;—he can delve, he can mine him
through the conduit he's off like a shot, sirs;
In each crevice and chink rag and cere-cloth we sink,
and matters now mend?—not a jot, sirs.
'Gainst the wall pin and peg fixes he, leg by leg,
then descends, just as jack-daws are doing:
What remain'd last to hold him?—why with nets to enfold
him;—
look around, 'tis the course we're pursuing.
Philocleon I add is the name of our dad,
for with Cleon he's friendly and mately;
The son, from mere spite, does Bdelycleon write,
and his manner's prodigiously stately.[3]

BDELYCLEON, XANTHIAS, SOSIAS, PHILOCLEON.

Bdel. (*calling*). Why, Sosias, I say Xanthias, lad— *Xant.* Lackaday!

Sos. What's all this? *Xant.* 'Tis our master just waking:

Bdel. Quickly here one or both—in the stove by my troth
and the bath-house our patient is raking.
There for creek and for cranny, like a mouse sly and canny,
he makes a most sharp inquisition:
For escape he's quite ripe—quickly, lad (*to Sos.*), guard the
pipe,—

[1] Lustrations and purifications by water were favourite religious rites among the Greeks.

[2] Those who laboured under the phrenzy, called Corybantian (and the old dicast is here considered as under its influence), appear to have been treated like those in later days bitten by the tarantula spider. Certain airs were played to them, and as those airs were usually pieces of music in honour of some deity, it was judged by the patient's sensibility to any peculiar air which deity it was by whom he was possessed. Ceres, Bacchus, the Nymphs, and Cybele were looked upon as the causes of madness by the ancients.

[3] To express this stateliness of manners, the poet in his usual way compounds a word, of which one term is derived from the neighing of a horse

and do you (*to Xant.*) at the gate take position.
Sos. 'Tis done, sir. *Bdel.* What sound from the funnel breaks
round? (*the dicast's head is seen rising out of the funnel of the bathing room.*)
good angels, protect us and love us!
What art thou, sight abhorr'd? *Phil.* Smoke, and please
you, my lord, on his way to the regions above us.
Bdel. Smoke, forsooth! of what wood? *Phil.* Of the fig-tree.[1]
Bdel. Why good:
never tree sharper fume yet emitted:
But to Smoke lest harm happen—Smoke, this cover I clap on—
and further a bar, Smoke, is fitted. (*passing a bar through the cover*)
Now back, whence you came and some new device frame;—
but oh my sad classification!
Who must henceforth write *son, begotten upon*
his mother by Smokification!
Sos. (*to Xant.*). Now your foot stoutly set 'gainst the gate—
harder yet—
I'll be with you again in a minute;
To the bolt sharply look—keep an eye on the plug,
or by Jove, boy, his teeth will be in it.
Phil. Why, my masters, what now?—villains, rogues, let me go;
the court sits, and I'm now of the latest:
What, still foil'd, and by apes? then (*sighs heavily*) Dracontides 'scapes,—
Bdel. And the harm, sir? *Phil.* To me, son, the greatest.
'Twas an answer divine from Apollo's own shrine,
says the God, my old worthy suit-pedlar;
If once through your flinching a defendant 'scape pinching,
you'll go off like an old rotten medlar.
Bdel. Gracious heav'n, be my guard! *Phil.* Then, dear son,
be not hard,
but in pity these gaolers withdrawing—
On the spot else I burst. *Bdel.* As you please, for the first—
Phil. Is denied? then your nets I am gnawing.
Bdel. Put the case you've no teeth. *Phil.* Now could I be his
death,
scurvy villain, his annihilation;

[1] The smoke of the fig-tree is particularly pungent. The allusion is to the judicial character of Philocleon.

Hoa! within there, my sword, dagger, poniard, . . . or board,
on which the wax marks condemnation.
Bdel. (*to Xant. and Sos.*). Some course dreadful he'll take. *Phil.*
(*fawning*) Nay in sooth you mistake,
too closely you sift, son, and dust me;
The moon's new [1] and I'd fain for our ass and sacks twain
find a purchaser—nothing more, trust me.
Bdel. That I take on myself. *Phil.* But the pelf, boy, the pelf,—
a bargain asks science and cunning.
Bdel. Leave the sale then to try, whether you, sir, or I—
(*calls*) the ass there!—best understand funning.
Xant. (*to Bdel.*). Cunning scheme and device to escape in a trice!
by my troth 'twas done smartly and neatly;
Bdel. But the gudgeon ne'er took, though the bait on the hook
was cover'd, I own, most discreetly.
Further scheme lest he venture, I'll myself the house enter,
and find where our donkey doth cram her—
So awhile I make exit (*leaves the stage, then returns with the*
ass) . . . pretty thing, what doth vex it!
because it must go to the hammer?
But, good ass, mend thy pace—still the tears in thy face?
oh forsooth no Ulysses doth back it—
Xant. Ulysses or not, by my soul she has got
her burden and (*passes his hand under the ass's belly*) hither
I track it.
Bdel. Where, good knave? *Xant.* Here below. *Bdel.* What, in
God's name, art thou?
speak, deliver, thy birth, appellation—
Phil. My name's Utis [2] and please ye—and further to ease ye—
I come from the land of 'Scapeation.
Bdel. The worse luck for Utis—quickly, lads, do your duties,
hands upon him—you see where he's riding:
Now he's drawn from his hole, how he looks like the foal
of— [3] *Xant.* Bum-bailiff, that wants a good hiding.

[1] On the first day of the month, a great market was held in Athens, at which it was usual to settle many pecuniary matters.

[2] The comic poets often found a subject of parody in Homer as well as in their rivals the tragedians. The story of Ulysses' escape from the den of Polyphemus by fastening himself under the belly of a large ram, and his facetiousness in puzzling the thick-headed giant by calling himself *Utis* i.e. *Nobody*, are too well known to need explanation.

[3] The position of Philocleon under the ass's belly justified the comparison of him to a sucking foal. The homely substitute applied by the slave is a reference to his judicial character.

Phil. Hands off, scurvy knave! what, my master, so brave?
then a conflict ensues. *Bdel.* Never doubt thee:
And its cause, crusty blade, is— *Phil.* An ass[1] and its shade.
Bdel. Nature's knave, there is nought true about thee!
Phil. Nought about me that's true!—lookye there and from you!
but thy speech will hold other direction,
When you find what a treat an old—dicast—if sweet,
can furnish with proper dissection.
Bdel. I have done, by my troth—man and ass, in with both
(*driving them into the house*)
in, I say, and a curse light upon ye.
Phil. Cleon, help: I am stay'd: fellow-benchers, your aid,—
Bdel. Bawl away, for the door's fairly on ye.
(*To the slaves*) Hand me stones there—a store—clap them fast
'gainst the door:
see the bolt's fairly shot in the bar, boy:
Add square timber and thick—roll me here (and be quick)
a cylindrical mortar and jar, boy.
Sos. Why the murrain, what hate bear the skies to this pate?
clods or acres are dropping believe me.
Xant. Pshaw! some mouse from above drops a token of love;
Sos. (*looking up*). Mouse indeed! if it is, I deceive me.
'Tis our judge, curse his wiles, he has slipt through the tiles—
now he's climbing the rafters so narrow—
Xant. Pize upon it, and now by the twin-gods I vow,
he has perch'd on the roof like a sparrow.
Quick the net hither bring—he'll be soon taking wing—
shuh! shuh! foolish bird, must I stone 'ee?

[1] An application by Demosthenes of this phrase, which implies fighting for nothing, is better known than its origin. As it serves to show the disposition of the Athenian people, it cannot be considered wholly irrelevant to our present purpose. Demosthenes was haranguing the Athenian assembly in favour of an accused person. The orator, finding he could not command the attention of his auditors, quitted his subject and broke into the following story. "I was going a short time since to Megara, said he, on a hired ass. The heat was excessive, but not a tree nor a shrub was to be found that could afford me shelter. I suddenly bethought myself, that I might avoid the scorching heat of the sun by sheltering myself under the belly of my conveyance. The owner of the animal stopped me: Sir, said he coolly, you hired the ass, but you did not hire the ass's shadow. The dispute grew hot between us." At these words there was a complete silence in the assembly, and every one listened attentively for the issue of this adventure. The orator saw his opportunity, and with much force upbraided his audience for their childishness and frivolity, who could listen to the story of an ass, and refuse their attention when the life of a fellow-creature was at stake.

Bdel. Now, Jove help me, to guard this one man is as hard
as to keep a firm hold on Scione![1]
Sos. The bird's caged, all is done—flight and egress there's none
I defy open stormers or creepers;
Be it merely a mote, good my lord, now let's float
just a moment's soft sleep on our peepers.
Bdel. Sleep indeed, idle drone! not a wink must be known;
all his comrades (a few minutes summing)
In a band will be here— *Sos.* Nay of that there's no fear,
the morning's too fresh for their coming.
Bdel. True enough, the day's young; then their sleep they
prolong:
What may mean so unwonted a slumber?
Scarce has night with black mask got half through with her
task,
ere their forces they muster and number.
Like a warisome band, they bear links in their hand;
and from Phrynicus,[2] primest old fellow,
They drawl out in a tone, 'twixt a chaunt and a moan,
some ditty right sav'ry and mellow.
Thus my father they call— *Sos.* And suppose we let fall
a stone-shower—what dost think, sir?—they'll breast it?
Bdel. Have a care what you do; they're a sharp angry crew,
quick as wasps' nest, when urchins molest it.
And like wasps they've their stings—from their haunches there
springs
a goad, sharpen'd to all admiration—
And their weapon once out, they come on with a shout,
with clamour and vociferation;
And they bounce and they bark, at once smoke, steam and
spark—
Sos. Away with hard thoughts and soft mind, sir,

[1] Scione was a city of Thrace, placed under Athenian protection. In the course of the Peloponnesian war the inhabitants revolted to Brasidas, the Spartan general, under circumstances which peculiarly irritated the Athenians. (Thuc. l. iv. c. 122.) They accordingly surrounded it with lines, and after besieging it for two entire years, at last stormed it. The decree proposed by the infamous Cleon not long before his death was then put into execution against the unfortunate Scionæans: every male arrived at manhood was put to death, the women and the children were reduced to slavery, and the town and lands given to the Platæans. (Thuc. l. v. c. 32)

[2] The poet throws much of this description into one of those enormous compound words which occasionally meet us in his farces, and which, as a witty writer intimates, ought not to be spoken but on long summer days

Give me stone, flint and pebble, and their numbers, though treble,
shall fly like the chaff from the wind, sir.

CHORUS,[1]—*Boy with a link.*

The CHOREGUS *addresses his troop.*

Chor. Cheerily, cheerily, Comias friend; say whence this hesitation?
Thou wert not wont to show delay and dull procrastination:
But stiff and strong as leathern thong, at march and step thoud'st tug hard,
While now with ease Charinades might pass thee as a sluggard.
Say, Strymodorus, best of men, a jury's pride and glory,
Are all our crew in sight and view—Euergides the hoary,
And Chabes, hard, of Phlya's ward the ornament and story?
They're near—they're here—remains most dear—(so few the more's the pity)—
Of all that corps in days of yore who press'd Byzantium's[2] city.
There you and I kept watch and ward—tried comrades—ne'er asunder—
Our prime delight to prowl at night[3] for petty prize and plunder—
Did we lay hand on vase or pan, on baker's dish or platter,
We chopp'd and drest a frugal feast—wild herbs or some such matter.
Then haste—dispatch, sweet comrades mine—this day sees Laches'[4] trial;
The man hath thriv'd and cash hath hiv'd past counting or denial.
Cleon our prop and stay did lay upon us strict injunction,

[1] The Chorus of this play consists of the fellow-dicasts of Philocleon, fantastically dressed as Wasps, a figurative mode of describing their sharp, irritable tempers.

[2] The admirable position of Byzantium, commanding as it did the entrance into the Euxine, on the waters of which the Athenians depended for their fish, and on the shores of which they relied for their corn, made the possession of this town an object of extreme importance to them.

[3] These nocturnal rambles and depredations seem to have been very common with the young Athenians, as they are more than once alluded to in the plays of Aristophanes.

[4] Laches appears to have been an active and judicious officer. For an account of his expedition to Sicily, see Thucydides, l. iii. and iv.

That morn should see our troop equipt for high judicial function.
And charges grave he further gave, that we bore front ferocious—
A three days' stock of wrath [1] lay'd in—to meet these crimes atrocious.
Onward then, friends, whose age with mine an equal course is making.
'Tis fit we wend to our journey's end, ere yet the day be breaking.
Nor as we go forget to throw the lamp's bright blaze around us;
A covert foe may work us woe, or ambush'd troop surround us.

Boy (*holding up the lantern*). Father, father, have a care, for I spy mud.

Chor. Then take a straw (there's store upon the ground)
And trim the lamp.

Boy. Nay, for that matter, father,
My finger here can serve the purpose.

Chor. Dolt! (*striking him*)
Your finger to the wick? and oil, alas!
So little plenteous! but you care not, you,
Whate'er the price.

Boy. Nay, if your fist enforce
The precept, I drop light and lantern both,
And hie me home; that's flat. 'Twill ill content ye
To wander here without a torch, all darkling,
And floundering in the dirt like hazle-hens.[2]

Chor. Tush! I trim greater men than you, believe me,
The lad says true; this must be mud I tread in.
Four days at most and we shall have same rain;
The link's thick snuff betokens it; rain ever
Comes down in showers when the wick thus thickens.
Well, well, be't so: the later fruits have need
Of water and a northern blast [3] to forward them.
But what, in wonder's name, I ask, hath fortun'd
Our fellow-dicast, tenant of this house,

[1] An allusion to the three days' stock of provision which all Athenian soldiers were obliged to lay in before they went upon an expedition.
[2] For a curious account of these birds, see Athenæus, l. ix. p. 387.
[3] The ancients are said to have considered the northern wind as favourable to the growth of some species of trees.

That he joins not our troop and company?
He was not wont to need being ta'en in tow,
But led the way, chaunting a strain (to th' heart
He loves a song) from tuneful Phrynichus.[1]
What if we troll'd a stave t' entice him out?
Let him once hear my voice, and trust me, fellows,
He'll not be long a prisoner to his house.

[*A song is here introduced.*

What may this mean? he answers not, nor shows
His face before the door. Sure the old gentleman
Hath miss'd his shoes; (*pauses*) or haply in the dark
Hath struck his foot and rais'd a tumour on it (*pauses*).
Heav'n send all's safe about the kidnies!—Well-a-day!
He was a man sharp, sour, severe—none more so:
No moving him with idle talk. Deaf ears
He turn'd to all. Did any beg and form
Their supplicating tones? he bent his head,
And "Friends," says he, "stone walls were never melted."
Plague on it! now I know his malady.
Yon fellow that escap'd us yesterday,
Cheating our cozen'd ears—(*mimics*) "forsooth he lov'd
Th' Athenians;—forsooth 'twas he who first
Gave notice of those deeds at Samos"[2]—doubtless
'Tis this hath anger'd him; nay, chance hath brought
A dangerous fever on him: well I know
His temper's edge and humour.

[1] There were three dramatic authors of this name; but the one here alluded to is the tragic writer, who flourished not long after Thespis. He was the Dibdin of his day; and his songs, particularly those in his "Sidonian or Phœnician Women," were exceedingly admired. The old bard appears to have possessed great facility of composition, since Aristotle has admitted it as a question among his Problems, "Why did Phrynichus compose more songs than the writers of the present day?"

[2] The Athenians, assisting the Milesians in their war with Samos, made themselves masters of that island. The Samians afterwards revolted to the Persians. Under Timocles, as Palmer contends, and not under Pericles, the Athenians again brought the island under subjection. One Carystion, who had given information to the Athenians of the revolutionary proceedings which were in agitation at Samos, was held in high respect for conveying the intelligence. Nothing therefore was more likely to be urged with success by any criminal than some such plea as that mentioned in the text. Philocleon, however, is represented as too keen a follower of his trade to feel at ease when any kind of plea diverted the course of the law.

(*Sings.*)

But arouse thee, nor pine,
Fellow-comrade of mine—
Ever yet has the spleen
A rank suicide been;
Better days will come o'er us,
For a fellow's before us,
To whom we can trace
All those doings in Thrace.[1]
And his purse it is full,
And 'twill bear a stout pull:
Then boldly let's face him,
Displace him, disgrace him;
Or clap him, why not?
Art and part in the pot.

On, boy—forward.

Boy. Father, I have a prayer
To make: wilt grant it, father?

Chor. Doubtless, chick:
But what wouldst have? some counters, boy?

Boy. No, father:
Some figs: O they be dainty sweet, your figs.

Chor. A rope, a rope, boy, for your collar: figs
Indeed! I buy them not, believe me.

Boy (*sulkily*). Look ye
Another guide then, I decline the task.

Chor. Go to, go to: a scurvy pay must furnish
Myself (and two beside) bread, wood and fish;
And you, forsooth, ask figs!

Boy. Father, put case
No court is held to-day: have you wherewith
To purchase us a supper, say, or sing we
The old ditty

Over the water and over the sea,[2]
The figs they grow sweet, but they grow not for me?

Chor. A murrain on thee, boy, thou'st hit the mark.

[1] Gray thinks that this passage refers to the great historian Thucydides then *strategus* in Thrace, and condemned to banishment for treachery or neglect in the loss of Amphipolis.

[2] A substitute is here given for a quotation from Pindar, paraphrastically describing the Hellespont.

Boy. Why now, mother mine,[1]
What a deed was that of thine,
To breed a son to pine and whine?
What could win thee?
Chor. Why now, purse of mine,
What a scurvy trick is thine,
Thus to glitter and to shine,
Yet have nothing in thee!
Boy. Heigh ho! nonny ho!
Nought remains for us, I trow,
But to sing for ever mo:
Both. Heigh ho! nonny ho!

PHILOCLEON, CHORUS.

(*Phil. sings from within*) I'm all thaw and dissolution,
Ah well-a-day!
For I hear that sweet conclusion,
As well I may!
Through these bars it comes full strong;
(*he appears at the window*) Friends, I'd answer you in song,
But no note's upon my tongue;
Ah well-a-day!
Fain the ballots I'd be trying,
Ah well-a-day!

For a little mischief sighing,
As well I may!
But these gaolers they have done me,
Gyves and manacles have won me,
And the hand of power is on me,
Ah well-a-day! (*a pause, then vehemently*)

O for a thunder-ball,
Jove, thou great lord of all!
Hissing and fizzing,
And whizzing now, let it fall;
Blasting and burning me,
Into smoke turning me,
Thus away done with
I shall be one with—

[1] Parodied from Euripides.

—Big bouncing Æschines,—
—Or Proxeniades—
Those sons of vanity
Smoke and inanity,
Who go off in a crack,
Like wild grapes, when they smack.
Oh! of these wishes two
Jove, one or other do.
With potent action
(This first I stickle for)
Bake me and make me
A cinefaction:
Then with a blast and blow
Heigh presto! let me go,
(Its sharpest part I trow)
Into a pickle jar.
(*sinks his voice*) Or, what were better far,
Turn me that stone into,
On which the robe and bar
Suffrage and sea-shell throw.

Chor. (*after a long pause*). Expound, discuss, who holds the thus, a thrall to hall and chamber,
Speak without fear, for none haunt here but near and dear well-wishers.
Phil. 'Tis my own son the deed has done—but friends observe more keeping
In tone and speech, for oh! the wretch above our heads is sleeping.
Chor. His cause, his plea, deliver me: what wills he, what inhibits?
Phil. His sire's high charge to judge at large the worthless knave prohibits,
To make resort to bar and court, to do a little mischief:
In place and stead he'd have me fed with sumptuous feast and blameless;—
But far from me, sweet comrades, be atrocity so shameless.
Chor. The worthless knave! and dare he brave the town, such speeches slipping?
And all forsooth because the truth you spoke about the shipping!

Phil. Nay, nay, believe we're on the eve of some great revolution;[1]
There's a pack'd crew or he'd not show such face of resolution.
Chor. Time it is then you splice crafty trick and device,
plot and scheme of some novel complexion,
Which may help and befriend to escape and descend
without hazard or chance of detection.
Phil. What's to do or pursue rest the counsel with you,
the advice shall not meet a denial;—
For like woman that's breeding, my fancy is feeding
on a suit and a cause and a trial.
Chor. Pause, ponder and think, is there hole, creek or chink
where a pick-axe may hope perforation?
Then in beggar's disguise, like Ulysses the wise,
you might work out your own liberation.
Phil. All is clos'd and compact—a mere ant in such act
might find himself straiten'd believe me;
Other plan thou must seek;—as for cranny or creek,
if there's any such here I deceive me.
Chor. Has it 'scap'd you quite whole, how the spits you once stole,
then escap'd down the ramparts descending;
The time, if you tax us, was then stubborn Naxos[2]
to the fate of our armies was bending.
Phil. Former feats why thus tell? I remember them well,
but the points do not tally, you noddy;
Neither sick then nor ailing, I had talents for stealing,
and was lord of my own limbs and body.
The feat fairly done, I could race it and run;
watch or guard there was none to prevent me;
Now arm'd cap-a-pee in complete panoply,
whole regiments you see circumvent me.
As from beacon or tower the whole country they scour,
pass and path they devour with their eyes, see;
At the post and the gate, spit in hand, two await
as a flesh-stealing cat to surprise me.
Chor. Yet plot and try some measure sly, some scheme to work thy freedom,

[1] The poet is here beginning to play with a well-known feature in the character of his countrymen, of which more notice will be taken hereafter.
[2] Naxos is famous in classical history as the place where Theseus, on his return from Crete, forsook the beautiful Ariadne.

And be not slow, sweet friend, for lo the morning light is breaking.

Phil. What trick or scheme may more beseem than this same net to gnaw through;
Dictynna's [1] rough, yet not enough but she the deed may pardon.

Chor. No scheme so fit to show thy wit and open path to safety.
About it straight—devour in state and ply thy teeth with vigour.

Phil. The feat is done—the race is won—but, friends, forbear all clamour;
A burst of joy may wake my boy and bring him straight upon us.

CHORUS.

Throw fear to the wind—
Let him utter his mind,
(Be it at his last pinch)
But the fifth of an inch,
And for pain and for smart
He shall eat his own heart.
I'll hold him such strife,
He shall race for his life,
And repentant shall feel,
What it is with proud heel
To spurn high relations,
Laws and deep promulgations,
Enactments, decrees,
Limitations and pleas—
Heard, pass'd, and decided—
As in that case [2] *provided.*

From the window now drop little cable or rope,
then descend with all fit expedition;

[1] *Dictys*, in Greek, signifies a net, and *Dictynna* is a name of Diana; the punning propensities of the poet are too well known to need any further explanation.

[2] A modern turn of expression has been given in this passage. In the original, the humour consists in putting Bdelycleon's wish to restrain his father from the law-courts on a level with an offence against the promulgations of "the goddesses," as Ceres and Proserpine were emphatically called.

In spirit and soul buckling first to you whole
Diopeithes, the mad rhetorician.
Phil. But suppose my design these curst gaolers divine,
and drop angle and line for prevention—
If a captive I'm made to the house, say what aid
I may hope against future detention?
Chor. The souls of holm-oak, fir and pine we'll invoke;
utmost aid, never fear, shall be lent you;
Their intendment we'll stay, happen after what may:
do I speak to the point and content you?
Phil. I confide—I obey (*pauses*), but if aught in the way
my glorious endeavour should mar, sirs;
My corpse (*sighs*) mind to bear with a sigh and a tear (*weeps*),
and bury it (*sobs*) near to the bar, sirs.
Chor. Throw all fear, friend, behind, boldly brace up your mind,
then descend by the rope, smoothly sliding;
But before you essay, 'twere as well first to pray
to the gods o'er your country presiding.
Phil. (*prays*). Lycus, hero and lord, who art won and ador'd
with the joys on a dicast attendant,
With the sighs and the tears, apprehensions and fears
of traverser and of defendant,
(For this thy lov'd trade, sworn abode thou hast made,
where a laugh or a smile never rises,
Of our guardians heroic, the firm steady stoic,
whom no feeling of pity surprises.)
Protection, salvation and commiseration
let thy servant and neighbour be winning;
So whate'er my distress, or how nature may press,
'gainst thy precincts I'll never be sinning. [*Descends.*

BDELYCLEON, CHORUS, XANTHIAS, SOSIAS.

Bdel. Hoa there! slaves to my call—
Sos. We awake one and all—
Bdel. Sounds and voices are round me—sounds human—
Sos. No egress, I hope, finds your sire—
Bdel. (*looking out*). But a rope
he has found him, as I am a true man!
And appendage thereto, limb and body I view,
'twixt the earth and the heavens depending—

Sos. (*looking out*). O thou devil's own sent! but I'm here to prevent
with a cudgel all further descending.
Bdel. With branch and with bough up aloft instant go,
at yon window take post, dost discern, lad?
With whip and with scourge his course retrograde urge,
and drive the ship back to her stern, lad.
Phil. (*as he drops upon the stage, Sosias violently drives him in*). O all that make suit, this and next year to boot,
exert now your utmost endeavour—
Smycythion, befriend—helping hand, Chremon, lend—
Pheredeipnus, bring aid now or never.

CHOREGUS.

Why delay we, why stay we? Where slumbers thus slack
The wrath and the rage, atrabilious and black,
When our hive rises up in it's pride?
Compassion, avaunt—let the death-dealing blade,
The sting at which guilt stands appall'd and dismay'd,
In its terrors and majesty whole be display'd; (*here the Chorus show their stings.*)
To thy teeth, scurvy knave, be defied.
And lads (*speaks to the attending boys*), doff your robes, and incontinent speed
With your tongues thunder-tipt and tell Cleon our need;—
Brief and speedy mind be your narration;—
We've a traitor, town-hater, a mischief-creator,
A cut-purse of causes, of suits an abator,
Who'd shut up the courts and leave Athens to sate her
The year through with a twelvemonth's vacation.
Bdel. (*to the Chor.*). With bow'd humbleness I beg you—ope your ears and spare your speech.
Chor. Hold and stay let go, or know, sir—heav'n itself our tongue shall reach.
Bdel. Base companions—scurvy dicasts—traitors to our town so free,
I'm not he, sirs, but can see, sirs, where there's open tyranny.
Chor. (*affecting horror*). To town, city and weal,
From his speech I appeal;
To Theorus's pride,

And whoever beside
By the arts of soft speech
Hath the power to reach
And hold in our nation
High and exalted station.

Xant. Master, master, see their tails, sir, are of pointed sting possest.

Bdel. Gorgias' son, when on his trial, felt them at his back and breast.

Chor. Stings which thy proud self shall feel too;—but companions mine, this way—
Cover flanks and close your ranks—point your arms and make assay.
Onward to the glorious combat—arm'd in fury, dipt in rage,
Soon shall know this haughty foe, what it is with Wasps t'engage.

Xant. Ill with me suits such a combat—Jove, thou seest my knee-pans fail;
And a creeping fear comes o'er me—as I view their pointed tail.

Chor. Thy hold then let go,
Or anon thou shalt know,
Prickt and wounded to high admiration;
That of all things below
To the tortoise men owe
Respect most and congratulation.

Phil. To it, lusty fellow-benchers—testy wasps, your weapons ply:
Assault, assail both head and tail, cheek and forehead, nose and eye.

Bdel. (*calling to his slaves*). Phryx—Masyntias—to the rescue—Midas, keep firm grasp and bold;
If he 'scape you, bond and fetter shall your feet and ankles hold.
Lymph nor wine your lips shall moisten, meal nor flesh your fast shall break;—
For their clamours—tush—despise them;—have we not heard fig-leaves crack?

Phil. (*prays*). Cecrops,[1] hero, lord and master (what if thy dimensions end

[1] The ancient king of Athens.

Footward in a wily serpent?) now stand forth a dicast's friend.
Must a barbarous band beset me—rascals from whose eyes before
I have forc'd salt tears [1] to trickle—measuring twenty to the score!
Chor. Harsh and grievous are the evils, which for hoary age are stor'd!
See yon graceless pair and mark them—how they force their ancient lord!
Mindless how his former bounty bought them frock and coat complete,
Cased their heads in hats and shelter'd from the winter's cold their feet;—
When the wind was loud and churlish, when thick clouds obscur'd the skies—
Yet no sense of former shoeings I discern now in their eyes.
Phil. (*to a slave who holds him*). Wilt thou not thy grasp forgo then?—rude companion,—scurvy brute,—
O bethink thee, how I caught thee from the vineyard stealing fruit! [2]
To the olive-tree I brought thee—there with scourge of leather tough
Thou wert beaten until envy might have said, he has enough.
Is all gratitude extinguish'd?—but I make a last appeal
To one—to both—my son I'm loath from the house upon me steal.
Chor. Vengeance yet this deed may visit, vengeance arm'd with scourge and thong,
And this pair be school'd what natures unto men like us belong;
Men of fiery mood and temper—burning in their pride of place,
Bent on justice and still bearing sharp nasturtium in the face.
Bdel. Ply your cudgel, lusty Xanthias—brush and beat this swarm away.

[1] It is only necessary to note the instruments, used by the ancients for the castigation of their slaves, to feel assured that the tears of these unhappy beings must have flowed pretty often.
[2] Plato in his Laws (lib. viii.) visits this offence very severely. He orders the slave a lash for every fig or grape which he purloins.

Xant. I'll content you; but meantime, sir, bear your portion in the fray.
Raise combustion, smoke and smother—fire and smoke the crew may scare—
Sos. Will ye not be gone, accurst ones— (*to Xant.*) fellow mine, the staff you spare.
Xant. On the pile set Æschines, lad; smoke them with Selartius' son. (*The Chorus are beaten off.*)
See the crew retire confounded—Victory! the battle's won.
Bdel. Thank their nurture—'twas a task, lads, had not thus been won with ease,—
Had the rogues been fed and fostered on the songs of Philocle.[1]

Chor. (*after a long pause of indignation*),
A mere pauper's eye
Now may see and descry,
That against my consent
Knowledge, wish, or intent,
A tyranny great
Hath crept into the state.
Who may gainsay this speech,
That beholds a mere wretch
Like this, with his hair
Curling tier above tier,
With his gauds and his gaws
Do despite to the laws,
Which our city and town
For their rule have laid down?—
And this too not tipping
His tongue, while thus tripping,
With points of sage reason
To cover his treason,
His hearers nor turning
With wit or deep learning,
To prove it were best
In a state thus deprest
Himself to invest
With unlimited power.
Bdel. (*to Chor.*) What, my friends, if we quit
This tongue-skirmish of wit?
And talk matters over
Like persons in clover,

[1] We may conclude that these songs were tough morsels.

In peace and in quiet
Without any riot:
Then end with a buss;
At a word, is it thus?

Chorus (*with marks of extreme abhorrence*). 'Tis a thing out of season:
I forsooth talk and reason
With a man who wants zeal
For the popular weal!
Who beside other things
Has a hank'ring for kings,—
Has with Brasidas [1] flirted,—
Wears his robe woollen-skirted,—
And, to crown all his sin,
Who advances a chin,
Where, as plain may be seen,
Never razor hath been!

Bdel. (*partly to himself*). 'Twere better by far
To give up the war,
And this father of mine
Out of hand to resign,
Than to risk a day's ease
With such scoundrels as these.

Chor. Things are not come to that; we've not yet reach'd
The parsley bed—to quote a sorry proverb—
Wait till the orator detail your crimes,
And summon up the partners in your guilt;
Then, look ye, will the hour of howling come.

Bdel. Ha' you done? ha' you now had your pleasure of me?
Will ye be gone?—will ye depart?—if not,
Advance the word, and we will give the day
Entire—suffering or doing—to the cudgel.

Chor. Never, while aught of me is left, believe,
Will I give o'er. What! you affect a tyranny,
And I stand idle! no, no, no.

[1] Brasidas is justly reckoned among the most eminent men whom Greece ever produced. When Isocrates, in his noble speech of Archidamus, records that honourable testimony to the Spartans, that the presence of a single Spartan in a besieged city was certain preservation to it, Brasidas, Pædaretus, and Gylippus are the three examples which he selects in proof of his declaration. At the time the *Wasps* was performed, the name of Brasidas excited no very pleasant feelings among the Athenians; for their interests in Thrace had suffered equally from his promptitude, his valour, and his eloquence.

Bdel. A tyranny!
But so it is: no matter what th' offence,—
Be't great or small,—the cry is "tyranny!"—
"Conspiracy!"—the word had near grown obsolete:
Full fifty years and we have miss'd the sound of't,
And now it stinks within the very nostrils:
Salt-fish is scant to't—'tis bandied everywhere.
The very markets fling it in your face:
Does one prefer a sea-bream [1] there to loaches?
Straight cries the vendor, whose adjoining stall
Holds loaches only: "Slight! my mind misgives me:
Surely this man is catering"—for what?
A *tyranny* forsooth!—Has any bought him
Anchovies, and needs leek to dress them with,
(And your green leek is pickle for a King,
A very royal food, I grant ye, sirs,)
The herb-woman with eyes askew regards him;
"And what!" says she, "you want a leek! friend, do ye?
Marry come up! you are not for a *tyranny*,
I hope!—What! Athens brings her condiments
Tribute, belike, for you!"
Xant. The other day . . .
Bdel. (*interrupting*). True, true, good knave: they love to tickle them
With words like these: 'tis music to their ears.
Instance myself—I wish'd not that my sire
Should be a home-forsaker,[2] morning-trudger—
A suit and cause-distracted man—but live
A gay and splendid life, like Morychus,—
What follows?—tut! "This man's in a conspiracy,
Affects a tyranny!" all cry.
Phil. And justly:
The milk of birds, I tell you, tastes less sweet
Than that same life your cares would rob me of:—
Talk not to me of thornbacks—tell me not
Of eels,—there's nought so grateful to my palate
As a small suit—dish'd and serv'd up—d'ye see—

[1] The sea-bream was a fish not commonly met with in Athens; the loach was supplied very plentifully.
[2] This description of the old dicast the original text comprises in one polysyllabic word.

With proper sauce and garnish to't.
Bdel. A false taste,
And nurtur'd on mere habit—lend your ear,
And a small waste of breath will show—(first setting
Some share of sense and wisdom to my auditor)—
That you're deceiv'd in this, and that the taste
Has thrown a cloud of error on your reason.
Phil. How? What? deceiv'd! and when I'm on the bench!
Bdel. Nay more, that you're a jest—a laughing-stock—
To those whom you think pow'rs divine—a slave
Who wants the sense to know that he is one.
Phil. What I! I, boy! to whom the world pays deference!
A slave! peace; you talk idly.
Bdel. I repeat it:
A slave, and one that in the veriest servitude
Still thinks he plays the lord and despot. You have
(And with all filial deference I state it)
The revenue of Greece: a noble harvest!
We'll be your scholars, sir, and learn: comes thence
To you observance?
Phil. Much and deep: be these the arbiters.
(*pointing to chorus.*)
Bdel. Nay, I subscribe thereto—(*to his servants*) give him his liberty,
And bring me out a sword: (*sword is brought*) if I outargue not
His speech, this trusty blade and I will be
Much nearer neighbours soon:—but what, good father,
If you abide not their award? what follows?
Phil. Be this my punishment:—whene'er I brim
A bumper to Good Fortune, may my eyes
Ne'er find—three obols at the goblet's bottom!
Chor. (*to Phil.*). Fellow pupil on whom the same schools
Bestowed education:
For once pray step over the rules
Of a common oration;
Urge something that's not in the strain
Of vulgar opinion;
And stretch thee beyond the weak vein
Of this youthful minion.
High matters and topics of state

Before thee are pending;
Remember our substance and weight
Thy tongue is defending.
If this youth prosper in his intent,
To the ground all is falling;—
But the gods in their mercy prevent
An issue so new and so galling!

Bdel. (*to his servants*). Quick one of you, a desk;—my style and tablets,
I'll note for memory's sake—item by item—
Whatever he advances—

Chor. (*to Phil.*) Look ye now: this shows
More prudence than we placed unto his mark.
There's wisdom in't.

Phil. (*to the Chorus*). What if he master me?

Chor. Grey hairs will then become a stale—a jest.
We shall e'en prove the mock of all the streets.
Who bear the sprigs,[1] will be as men of dignity
Compar'd with us;—we shall be term'd the shell,
The rind, the husk of a defendant's oath—
Thou, then, on whose tongue,
All our cause we have hung,
Our throne, domination,
Pride and high acceptation,
Give thy speech fullest play,
Sift, examine, and weigh:
So without more delay,
One—two—three; and away!

PHILOCLEON, BDELYCLEON, CHORUS.

Phil. At your word off I go, and at starting I'll show,
convincing the stiffest opinion;
That regalia and throne, sceptre, kingdom, and crown,
are but dirt to judicial dominion.
First in pleasure and glee, who abound more than we;
who with luxury nearer are wedded?
Then for panic and frights, the world through none excites,
what your dicast does, e'en tho' gray-headed.

[1] The poet alludes to the sprigs of olive carried in the festival of Panathenæa. An Athenian law provided that this should be the task of the old men most distinguished for personal appearance.

Soon as ever I creep from my bed and break sleep,
through the courts runs a warning sensation;
There the mighty—the sly—men of four cubits high,
wait my coming in hot trepidation.
First a hand, soft as wool—t'other day, it was full
from the public exchequer and treasure,
Fast upon me is laid; and my knees captive made,
supplications pour in without measure.—
"Father,—neighbour and friend—help and mercy extend,—
mayhap when in office and station,
Or when serving the mess, you took care to *ex*press
in private a small compensation."
Knave and hangdog! my care from a swing in the air
sav'd his heels on a former occasion,
Or the rogue, and be curst! had not known—
Bdel. (*writing on his tablets*). Item first:
suit . . . petition . . . and *warm supplication.*
Phil. Loaded large thus with prayer, in the court I take chair,
from my brow wrath and choler clean clearing;
As for promises made out of doors of my aid,—
with the four winds of heav'n they're veering.
There a thousand tones drop, all attun'd to one stop,—
mercy—pardon—release—liberation;
Of the whole race of men, like a dicast who then
receives compliment, court, adoration?
His pawns and his pledges one defendant alleges;
and his griefs and his ills while detailing,
The items are thrown with such skill, that my own
in the balance to nothing are failing.
With mythical tales this my fancy regales,
t'other dips into Æsop and fable;
While a third slily throws out his quips and bons-mots
my passion and wrath [1] to disable.
Turn I still a deaf ear? better suitors are near:—
led by hand and in court quick appearing,
The accus'd to his aid calls his imps,—boy and maid;—
I bend gracious and deign them a hearing.

[1] So much were the Athenian dicasts guided by the influence of these feelings, that Lysias gives us to understand, when several persons were put upon their trial for the same offence, only the last tried had the chance of a fair hearing. By that time, says the orator, the judicial choler is abated, and the culprit allowed to produce proofs of his innocence.

With bent heads . . . in tones sweet . . . pretty lambkins! they bleat:
the father, submissively falling,
Does me suit as a God,[1] for he knows, at my nod
his accounts pass without over-hauling.
(*mimics*) " If the tones of a lamb sooth your ear, sure I am,
that this boy's, my lord, will not prove hateful;
If beauty more warms,—sir, this girl hath her charms,
and sure she would not be ungrateful."
Downward straight goes my ire, like the tones of a lyre,
when the pins and the pegs are unscrewing:—
(*turning to his son*) Speak, explain, what dost say; call you this rule and sway,
when the rich to your scoffs are thus suing?
Bdel. For our tablets more food—(*writes*) *is uncivil and rude, at the wealthy makes scoff and derision ;*
But all Greece to your sway bows submissive you say;
what profits gains this supervision?
Phil. Great and many are won: and imprimis, for one
ask your learned and critical juries,
What is felt when a boy, timid, shrinking, and coy
stands, display'd, *naturalibus puris !* [2]—
Comes some actor [3] divine, the first man in his line,
'fore our presence?—acquittal's denied him:—
Till we've made him rehearse, and in smooth flowing verse,
such parts as have most prov'd and tried him.
Say the play-house first flute gains a cause and a suit;—
a melody sweet and befitting

[1] This will perhaps pass with the reader for an extravagance; but expressions nearly as strong might be produced from the works of Xenophon, Isocrates, and other grave writers, all tending to show the extreme deference and submission paid to the dicasteria.

[2] Non poterant ingenuorum filii se gerere pro civibus, nisi adhuc pueruli professi essent nomina, primum apud Curiales; deinde apud populares. Ea professio dicebatur δοκιμασια. Prioris professionis annus legitimus erat quindecimus. Quum autem qui præfecti erant isti probationi, non satis certum ætatis argumentum sumere poterant, solebant puerorum pudenda studiosè explorare. Addit Scholiastes, ut ad publica munia utiles essent. Sane enim hodie neque Presbyteri neque Papæ creantur, nisi se mares esse ostenderint.—*Florens Christianus.*

[3] The person complimented in the text is Oeagrus, a famous tragic actor, and the play selected for the trial of his powers is the *Niobe* of Sophocles or Æschylus.

We exact for his fee, in his muzzle [1] which he
blows deftly as court we are quitting.
Some father is gone,—dead,—defunct—well anon!
leaves a girl, good;—an heiress, much better;—
The *old put* would confer a bed-fellow on her,
and his will leaves him drawn to the letter.
Lords of locks, seals, and keys, straight the parchments we seize,
while a codicil neatly appended
Cheats the wary and wise; and the girl's made a prize
to some youngster, who's better befriended.
And the deed boldly done, further mark me, there's none
dare report or inquiry [2] request on't;
While another thus doing, there'd be forthwith ensuing
Board, Commission, Report, and the rest on't.

Bdel. All the rest is quite right—done as gentlemen might—
and I offer my best gratulation:
But to cancel a deed—where an heiress . . . take heed,
'tis a dangerous and base speculation.

Phil. Crowded house, warm debate, mark some pris'ner of state:—
doubts ensue,—hesitation,—adjournment:
To prevent further stir Lords and Commons refer [3]
the case to judicial discernment.
Then some pleader [4] stands forth, and that scoundrel,[5] whose worth
show his synonyms, " fawner "—" shield-dropper "—
And their note is the same, " While *I* live," both exclaim,
" the Commons have no interloper."
But the votes most he wins there, his speech who begins,
" Sirs, I move with profoundest submission,

[1] The poet, from that feeling of contempt which the comic writers affected towards the flute-players, employs the most degrading word he can select for that mouth-piece which the ancient musicians used with their wind-instruments.

[2] The dicasts were the only persons not subjected to the Euthynē; hence their sovereign power.

[3] Besides other duties of government, the Senate and the Ecclesia (*i.e.* the General Assembly of the people) sometimes acted as Courts of Justice. They seldom, however, assessed the punishment; the matter, after having been discussed before them, was sent to another tribunal for a definitive sentence. *Anach.* t. ii. p. 322. *Demosthenes contra Eubulidem*, v. ii. p. 1316.

[4] The person specified in the text is Evathlus.

[5] Cleonymus.

After one single turn, that the courts all adjourn,
nor labour a second decision."
Even he whose voice stills thunder, hammers and mills,
Cleon, dares not devour, jeer nor scoff us,
But with fly-flap [1] in hand, taking humbly his stand,
beats and brushes the vermin clean off us.
I your father might sue, graceless youngster, to you—
in the warmth of paternal emotion;
Yet your duty I stake ne'er the impress would take
of so earnest and warm a devotion.
Nay Theorus beside (and his pride's lowest tide
would dispute with Euphemius precedence),
Sponge in hand blacks my shoes—you may doubt an you choose,
'tis a fact indeed almost past credence.

Bdel. Talk and spare not for speech—end at last you will reach:
and the proverb hold good, I opine, sir,
In spite of ablution, scent and perfume, pollution
show'd still that the sow was a swine, sir.

Phil. But the best of my lot I had nearly forgot—
the court left and well loaded with honey,
Scarce in sight of my home, all the house, trooping, come,
and embrace me, such coz'nage hath money!
Next my girl, sprightly nymph! brings her nakpin and lymph—
feet and ankles are quick in ablution;
Soft'ning oils o'er them spread, she stoops down her head,
and drops kisses in utmost profusion.
"I'm her sweetest papa!—I'm the pride of the bar!"—
her lips in meantime neatly playing,
As with rod and with line, the wench angles so fine,
my day's pay is unconsciously straying.[2]

[1] Those who have travelled in southern climates, and particularly in Greece, will feel the value of this office. "The annoyance that we endured from innumerable myriads of flies," says Mr. Hughes when describing the Isthmus of Corinth, "was some drawback from the pleasure of contemplating these beauties. The bellies of our horses were actually covered with a dense black mass of those insects, so that I no longer wondered at the ancient Pagans for invoking their supreme Jupiter under the title of 'the fly-killer;' a 'giant killer' would not have been half so useful."

[2] The young wheedler's mode of filching her father's obols (not very delicate, it must be confessed) arose out of a practice, common among the lower Athenians, of carrying their money in their mouths.

Seats her then by my side, Mrs. Dicast my pride,—
feeling soul, she knows well what my calling,
And my labours to greet, brings refreshments most sweet,
while speeches still sweeter are falling.
"Deign this pottage to sip,—pass this cake o'er your lip,—
here's a soft and a soothing emulsion,
You cannot but choose eat this pulse, nay, I'll use
to my heart's dearest treasure compulsion."
Then I sit and I swill and I riot at will,
nor cast eye of discreet observation,
How your eye or your man's watches, gauges and spans
what my appetite's warmth and duration.
Never yet, by my fay, did I bid that knave lay
for supper, or otherwise task him,
But a cloud ever hung on his brow, lest my tongue
a cake or dish extra should ask him.
Thus from head, sir, to feet, I'm in armour complete,—
fenc'd and shelter'd from ev'ry disaster,
And your wine you may spare, while this (*draws a case from under his vest*) falls to my share
and calls me its lord and its master.
Outward-form'd, 'tis an ass — spare your mirth — let that pass:—
inward holds he what asks best appliance:
(*Drinks and looks at it*) Rogue! as keen he surveys your pinch'd bickers, he brays
and trooper-ton'd bids you defiance.[1]

Speak, graceless child, and say
Is this or not high sway,
Thus in respect and pay
Foremost to shine!—
Nay and that lofty word,
Which of Jove's self is heard,
Is it not oft referr'd
To me and mine?
When the Court storm and ply
Loud voice and angry cry,

[1] The original, to express this defiance, uses one of those coarse terms not unfrequently found in the comedies of Aristophanes, and which point out pretty significantly for what kind of audience they were chiefly intended.

What says the passer-by,
Who hears the clatter?
Save us! he's heard to say,
For the Court make to-day
Loud thund'ring noise;—I pray,
What is the matter?
And when my lightnings flash
With a flake and a crash,
Do their wild terrors dash
Merely the poorest?
No, they the proudest scare,
Forcing them to a prayer,[1]
While their uplifted hair
Stands in a forest.
(*Turning to his son*) Nay my own offspring too
Pays me a terror due,
Not one among the crew
My wrath more fearing:
But may I choke and die
On bread of wheat or rye,
If for yourself I
One jot am caring!
Chor. Never was so much tact!
Diction neat and compact,
Argument quite exact,
Terse and unsparing!

Phil. (*ironically*). He thought to gather in nice easy grapes,
And none disturb him at his vintage—yet
The varlet knew, where my forte lay, and where
I'm strongest.
Chor. O how he wields his tongue,
—Neither too short nor long!—
I grow both tall and strong,
Marking his fury:
I seem in Fancy's eye
To the Blest Isles to fly,
There the great task to ply,
Of judge and jury.

[1] The common Athenians used to whistle at lightning: an action equivalent with them for our—*Lord be merciful.* Its effects in causing terror are described in the original in very Aristophanic terms indeed.

Phil. Look at him! look! mark how he gapes and yawns
And loses all his faculties!—trust me, boy,
Those eyes of thine shall see, aye and this day too,
Whips, thongs and scourges for their comfort!
Chor. (*to Bdel.*). If thou would set thee free,
To it most instantly,
Sly trick or policy
Deftly pursuing!
Who dares my taste oppose,
Be it in verse or prose,
With him I straightway close,
To his undoing.
If your tongue cannot reach
Healing and smoothing speech
To close this open breach
And sooth my choler:
Thou'd'st better seek to still
This my obdurate will,
Grinding it in a mill,
Or with a roller.
Bdel. (*after a long pause*). Hard is the task, and needs appliances
Much greater than a comic bard may boast,
To cure th' embossed sores and headed evils
Of this our public weal—yet—(*looking up to heaven*) father
Jupiter—
Phil. Father no Jupiters on me—prove me
A slave, thou varlet, prove me, or thy life
Shall pay the forfeit: yes thou diest, e'en tho'
Thy sire be excommunicated [1] for't—
Prove me, I say.
Bdel. Then, my dearest papa (sour faces I bar)
show us first on a rough calculation; (*the old dicast hastily pulls out his judicial shells*)
(Hands and fingers will do for the task) what is due
to our city from foreign taxation.
This set down in a lump, to the home duties [2] jump,
fees, per centage, and dues *ad valorem*,

[1] Literally, *though I be obliged to abstain from the slaughtered victims.* Those convicted of murder were not allowed to partake of the public sacrifices at Athens.

[2] The general sources of Athenian revenue are collected with sufficient accuracy in the following passage of De Pauw. "La République faisait face

The markets, the mines, confiscations, and fines,
take them all in due order and score 'em.
Tribute, taxes and toll, thrown in talents, the whole
covers nearly, I think, twice ten hundred:
Now, *per contra*, set near what the sum every year,
that for court-fees and dicasts is sunder'd.
These, if rightly I count, to six thousand amount,
(and my number, I'm sure's somewhat thrifty)
Six thousand we'll say—at three obols a day,
the cost reaches but talents thrice fifty.[1]

Phil. Thrice fifty dost give?—not the tithe, as I live,
of the income our city's deriving!

Bdel. Father mine, even so: remains further to know
on the residue who then are thriving.

Phil. Marry who, but that crew, who keep ever in view,
with a speech and a pocket oration?—

(*Mimics*) "*Be that moment my last, which beholds a doubt cast*
On my love[2] *for the good Attic nation!*"

Bdel. Father mine, right enough—and for such tricksey stuff,
such pillgilded superfine speeches,
You give up side and back, nape and heel, to a pack
of hungry and deep-sucking leeches.
For our poor subject states, other fortune awaits;
need our statesmen a little smooth plunder?
"A boon there, a boon!" 'tis exclaimed, "and eft-soon,
or your town falls about you in thunder."

au courant des dépenses avec son revenu ordinaire, qui provenait des îles, et des pays conquis, des villes tributaires, des droits d'entrée et de sortie sur les marchandises, des salines du Pirée, et de Phalère, des mines d'argent à Sunium, des oliviers consacrés à Minerve, des pêches à la côte Occidentale et Orientale de l'Attique, des confiscations et des amendes, de la taxe mise sur les courtisanes, et de la capitation des étrangers, qui était, comme on sait, de douze drachmes pour les hommes et de six drachmes pour les femmes, et les enfans."—*De Pauw*, t. i. p. 385.

[1] The Scholiast explains this passage thus. Two months in the year were dedicated at Athens to festivals: the tribunals were open therefore during ten months only, or 300 days; each day cost 18,000 obols, that is, 3000 drachmæ, or a half-talent; consequently, to every month may be set down fifteen talents and to every year 150 talents.

[2] Demosthenes gives us much the same picture of his precious patriot Aristogeiton.—"With all this villainy and guilt upon his soul, what is his conduct in the General Assembly? There he is heard for ever at the top of his voice—'You are deceived, Athenians—you have nothing but traitors and conspirators about you—no one has the least love for the democracy but myself—perish Aristogeiton, and all patriotism is extinct.'"

While for you—let there fall, to your mouthing the stale
and offal of this your dominion:
You quietly wink, nor regard how you sink,
and degrade you in foreign opinion.
For, believe me, strict note take th' allies, how your throat
in the ballot-box ever is dipping;
And seeing the meal you're content thence to steal,
hold you cheap as—poor Connus's tripping.
But your guides it ensures dainty gifts and douceurs,—
pot and pan for preserving and pickling,
Tap'stry rich for the room, and a wine whose perfume
the most critical palate is tickling.
Add goblet and vase, jewel bracelet and glass;
add pillow-case, sheeting and ducking;
Add spices and cheese—the mere milk of soft ease
their delicate fortune is sucking.
While to you, as of yore, working hard scull and oar,
contented to drudge and to pull it:
From this wide vassal land not one brings to your hand
head of garlic, as sauce to your mullet.

Phil. 'Tis a point I can't moot—(*sighs*)—I myself made vain suit
for three heads to Eucharides lately;
But a weightier charge you must prove more at large;—
you call'd—and in terms somewhat stately—
Me, your father, a slave—

Bdel. And what proof need you crave,
beside those we're in office enstalling?
They, a fat, pursy crew, feeding flatterers too,
with the crumbs from their perquisites falling.
While you, that have brush'd seas and oceans, and push'd
where'er wounds and bruises were dealing;
With scull and oar spent, siege and scale, are content,
if three obols come under your feeling.
Even this moves less spleen, than our town's frequent scene,
the People's high majesty bending,
And to form Court or Board, at some popinjay's word,
with ready obedience wending.
Chæreas' son soft and bland, is a sample to hand;
(*mimics*) he with legs planted wide in this fashion,
Fribble-like, swings his frame, then dares to exclaim,
in a tone betwixt grandeur and passion,

"Let the first blush of dawn, on the next coming morn,
see the courts throng'd with ready attendance;
On whom the doors close, the defaulter now knows
on his fee he may place no dependence."
And the fopling's self—s'death!—let him once utter breath,
and be he there sooner or later,
A counsellor's fee is his portion, which he
by trick and contrivance makes greater.
'Twixt the Archon and him (and each knows t'other's trim)
there needs but a good understanding;
And a gift well applied, on the criminal's side,
the good office of both is commanding.
Things are then in a train: and the suit 'twixt the twain
passes off for a little joint plunder:
In the act thus of sawing, if one pulls, t'other drawing,
the log is soon cloven asunder.—(*Philocleon discovers marks of astonishment.*)
But all this is new, strange and foreign to you,
for your eyes, other sight all unheeding,
Never turn once or wag from the Treasurer's [1] bag,
and the obols which thence are proceeding.

Phil. Knaves and rogues! do they use thus their lord to abuse?
with choler and wrath I am quaking;
I swear and I vow, that I feel—Jove knows how,—
but my very foundations you're raking.

Bdel. And take one further view—while your peers, sir, and you,
might with riches fill pocket and coffer,
Into corners you're driving, by the men who are thriving
on the love which to Demus they proffer.
From Sardinia your sway reaches Marmora's sea,
cities many and rich intervening;
Your revenue, despite, is like beard of a wight,
when the steel its first harvest is gleaning.
And small as your fee, even that comes not free;—
drop by drop it is dealt, slow and sullen;—
Weakly creatures so lap, to keep life in them, pap
through a strainer of linen or woollen.

[1] This was the purse-bearer, who gave the dicasts their fee of court. He was called in the Greek language *Colacretes*, as being entitled to the skins and extremities (*cola*) of animals slaughtered in the public sacrifices.

Marry why? 'tis their aim, who your government claim,
on short commons to keep you and sparing,
That your lord you may know, and when slipp'd at a foe,
that your leap may be instant and daring.
Other tale it would be, did their *will*, sir, agree
with their power to aid and befriend you;
And I'll tell you which way—

Phil. Prithee do, boy—

Bdel. You sway
towns one thousand, which toll and tax send you.
On each, sir, of these (nay the thing's done with ease)
of our burgesses billet just twenty;
Of Athenian men thus might thousands twice ten
banquet bravely on good cheer and plenty.
On rich milk and whipp'd cream, life away they might dream,
neither chaplets nor flesh of hare [1] sparing:
Feasting high with delight, as becomes men whose might
noble Marathon's trophy was rearing.
Thus should limbs that were bred here in Athens be fed;
now, like scrubs in our olive-yards toiling,
You follow the heels of the Treasurer who deals
the stipend which pays your turmoiling.

Phil. Out upon it, what charm numbs my elbow and arm!
nerve and muscle and thewes strangely erring
Of my hands the sword bilk—I grow soft—and (*sobs*) the milk
of my mother within me is stirring.

Bdel. Comes a panic and fright on these rulers? outright
Eubœa's the toy thrown to please ye:
With a promise to mete fifty bushels of wheat,
in hopes that the bribe may appease ye.
Fifty bushels, forsooth! five come nearer the truth,
and those barley, dol'd out in small measure;
And at proof should you trip in strict citizenship,
your claim fails e'en to this scanty treasure.
'Tis for this I keep guard, and close hold thee in ward,
by table and feast a hope growing,
That that mouth I may close, which still gapes wide on those,
who their words of six foot are forth throwing.

[1] Hares were rarely found in Attica; hence they are continually alluded to in these plays as a great luxury.

And my will still holds good: in your table and food,
nothing solid or nice shall be wanted;
But for leave that you lap the Colacretes' pap,—
father mine, it shall never be granted. [*A long pause.*

Chor. 'Twas a man of invention,
Wise and upright intention,
Who first thought to mention,
"In a case of dissension,
Never dare to decide,
Till you've heard the other side!"[1]

(*To Bdel.*) Thou hast conquer'd past doubt—
Foil'd thy man out and out—
I bow to thy wit,
And submissive, as fit,
Staff and choler I quit;—
Staff and rage—nothing loth—
To the ground I drop both.

(*To Phil.*) Sir, I am
Your mate in years, and we have held a long
Companionship together—take my counsel:
Give ready ear to all he says, and show him
Instant compliance—(*sighs*)—would that I had kin
Or kind to grace me with such bounteous favours!
Sure there's the finger of some god in this:
Heav'n is the steward of this noble bounty;—
If you accept it not—

Bdel. All that may his age sustain,
Comfort yielding—chasing pain—
Here before this presence I
Promise ever to supply.
Solid boot and mantle brave,—
Broth to sup—and bath to lave;—
These and more his age shall have:—
With a blanket for his bed,
And a pillow for his head,
And a tidy wench to coax him,
When the megrims plague and hoax him.
[*Philocleon makes no answer.*

(*To Chor.*) My arguments strike not;—
They fall to the ground:

[1] Quoted from the *Heracleidæ* of Euripides.

Believe me I like not
This silence profound.

Chor. Nay, nay, you construe him too closely—
His mind is physicing itself—he meditates
Upon his former phrenzy, and laments
His non-compliance with your prudent warnings:
Anon you'll see him all obedience—wise
And tractable—reform'd and revolutionis'd.

Phil. Oh! oh!

Bdel. (*to Chor.*). What may this exclamation mean?

Phil. Pleasure—treasure—blessed lot!
Hence avaunt! I know you not.
Thought, volition, wish and care,
Mind and body, all are there,
Where the loud-voic'd herald cries,
"Who's uncanvass'd?—let him rise!"[1]
I must be the beans among,
Giving suffrage, voice and tongue.
Haste, my soul—why thus delay'd?
Avaunt, grim ghost! disperse, black shade![2]
O that I may never meet
On my high judicial seat
Cleon as a culprit there!
For before the heav'ns I swear,
I'd his very self assess,
And for fine and damage press. [*A long pause.*

Bdel. Father, I do beseech you, yield assent.

Phil. To what, son? speak, explain; one point omitted,
I have a ready ear for all.

Bdel. And what's
Reserv'd?

Phil. That I abstain not from the courts:
For harkye—death only separates them and me.

Bdel. Well, if it must be so (and an old charm
I see is on you), be your will obey'd:
Only quit not the house for this your occupation;
Rest here with us, sir; make your home a Court,

[1] In Athenian trials, when all had apparently given over voting, lest any out of favour should suspend his suffrage, the herald made the proclamation in the text.

[2] Quoted from the *Bellerophon* of Euripides.

And deal out law among its inmates.
Phil. How?
Discuss, unbuckle, son: explain which way—
But you are trifling—
Bdel. There your pardon, sir;
The maid, we'll say, hath op'd the door—hath hous'd
A suitor: good, 'tis a case; you straight assess
The damages: a single drachm here covers them.
The house you see will furnish you like practice
As does the Bar:—with these advantages:—
Is there a morning sun? you take your seat
Abroad, and judge and sun [1] you both at once:
Falls rain? you house within: comes snow? you're chair'd
Beside the fire and there take cognisance:
Art loth to quarrel with your sheets at morn?
Sleep till mid-day and laugh at interference.[2]
Phil. Why this sounds well.
Bdel. If one extend his pleadings,
You need not then give hungerly attendance,
Biting yourself and eke the pleader too.
Phil. But then to eat between the pleadings!—will not
That be to pawn experience to the appetite,
And make the judgment rebel to the palate?
Bdel. Just the reverse:—and hence a common saying
In this our town: "the witnesses so lied
Through thick and thin, the Bench could scarce divine
The truth, howe'er they *chew'd* upon the matter."
Phil. Right, right: I yield assent: one other word:
The fee, the salary: from whence comes that, son?
Bdel. My purse supplies it—
Phil. Why this is well—this pleases—
This is a luxury indeed: to earn
A fee and have no partner in the gain!
By the same sign I do remember now
A scurvy trick Lysistratus put on me

[1] The poet, in the original, plays upon the word *Heliazein* and *Helios*, one of which signifies the sun and the other the execution of the judicial office in the court of Heliæa.

[2] Of the nine principal magistrates in Athens, six bore the common name of Thesmothetæ. Besides other duties it was their province to appoint on what days the dicasts should sit, and to exclude from the office such as did not come at the proper time.

Some two days since—it is a jeering rogue!
We had received (dost mark?) a drachm in partnership.
My knave incontinent makes for the fishmarket,
And changes it to smaller coin: then puts
Into my hand three scales[1] from off a mullet.
I, thinking they were obols, lodge them straight
Within my mouth, till, warn'd by the ill-savour,
I spit the intruders from me.—Boy, I'd fain
Have drawn him to the courts for this.

Bdel. Made he
Excuse?

Phil. Health to your ostrich-coats, quoth he!
Hard cash, I see, disturbs not your digestion.

Bdel. The jeering knave! Here then thou art a gainer.

Phil. I do allow it: give no breathing then
Unto your purpose, but about it straight.

Bdel. Tarry awhile: I will be here anon,
And bring with me all proper articles. [*Enters the house.*

Phil. The prophecy is now complete—'twas nois'd
A time should come, when Athens should behold
Each citizen in his own house administer
The rites of justice, and each vestibule
Become a Law Court, in most tiny miniature
Imaging Hecate's Chapel 'fore the door.

Bdel. (*returning*). What say'st? see all that I deliver'd thee
And more to boot—this implement will hang
Beside you on a peg and serve occasion.

Phil. Now this is clever: tut—your man in years
That's troubled with the strangury, owes not
The fee of thankfulness for aught so much
As this.

Bdel. Here too is fire, and lentils on't;
Waiting the call of appetite.

Phil. And this too
Speaks cleverness: let a fever be upon me,
What then? at least I shall not lack a fee,
For I can tarry here and sup my pottage—

[1] The Athenians had a great objection to copper money; and it was with reluctance that they used it in making the smallest payments. Their taste therefore, or their vanity, was only to be satisfied by silver coins of so diminutive a size that they were often mistaken for the scales of fish.

But, boy, what means this cock? why chanticleer
Among us?
Bdel. If soft sleep come over you,
(And during pleadings sleep is apt to come),
This bird's loud notes will break your heavy slumbers.
Phil. One thing is wanting, son; the rest commands
My good opinion.
Bdel. What may that be, sir?
Phil. (*whispering complacently*). Couldst not procure a figure now of a Lycus?
Bdel. Here's one [1] at hand: the king in very person!
Phil. I bow before my mighty lord and master.
[*Prostrates himself.*
How fierce and truculent he looks!—(*gazes*)—Methinks
He wears now a strange semblance to—Cleonymus!
Sos. Aye, and, like him, he's not in his full armour! [2]—
Bdel. (*to Phil.*). Please, sir, to take your seat: that done, we'll have
A suit before you presently.
Phil. A suit,
A suit: it is an age, since I have ta'en
My seat.
Bdel. (*soliloquising*). What suit to bring before him now!
Let's see—hath any of our family offended?—
There's Thratta—she who lately burnt the pottage—
Phil. Hold, or I sink! you have near ruin'd me—
You cite a cause, and yet no barrier, boy,
Protests the court!—A court without a barrier!
Might as well have a church without an altar.
Bdel. 'Tis a defect soon heal'd—I'll in and bring one.
To see the power, which use and custom have!
[*Entering the house.*
Xant. (*within*). A pestilence upon thee, knavish cur!
To think that we should harbour such a cur!—
A graceless cur!—a most atrocious cur!
Bdel. How now! what ail'st?
Xant. Here's Labes here, our mastiff,

[1] It appears from the Scholiast that Bdelycleon brings in a picture of Lycus.
[2] The twelve heroes (of whom Lycus was one) were always represented in full armour.

Hath broke into the kitchen, sir, and, curse
His maw, swallow'd a whole Sicilian cheese.
Bdel. A case, a case! issue a warrant, cite him
Before my sire—you, Xanthias, play the accuser.
Xant. Not I, by the mark: here's one of his own gender:
Open the case, and he, he says, will play
Th' accuser.
Bdel. Let them both be introduc'd. [*Enters the house.*
Xant. Your bidding shall be done.
Phil. (*to his son, returning with a swine-cote*[1] *for a barrier*).
Dispatch, dispatch!
My mind's eye sees a fine.
Bdel. One moment, while
I bring the styles and tables.[2]
Phil. Thou dost waste
The time—would'st be my death, boy? Psha! let be—
Let be—these nails of mine will serve the purpose:
They'll draw a line as well as any style.
Bdel. Sir, they are here.
Phil. Now then let's have your witnesses.
Bdel. It is my purpose.
Phil. Who's the first?
Bdel. A pestilence!
As I do live, I have forgot to bring
The urns.[3] [*Offers to go out.*
Phil. Harkye! What run you for?
Bdel. We have
No urns.
Phil. I need them not. 'Twas my intent
To use these jugs[4] instead: what sayst to that?
Bdel. Why that thou hast a pleasant fancy, sir,
And ap'st the humour of our country bravely.
(*To the servants*) In, one of you, and bring us fire, and myrtle-boughs,

[1] The swine-cote is selected as a barrier for the purpose of introducing a joke, which may be omitted without any great loss to the reader.

[2] By the tables are meant those of wax, on which were drawn the lines of condemnation or acquittal. The styles are the instruments with which these lines were drawn.

[3] The urns in which the votes were collected.

[4] The jugs, which the dicast, in his impatience for a trial, proposes to use instead of urns, were most probably those containing his soups. In substituting for the water-glass, which regulated the *time* of the pleadings in an Athenian court of justice, he loses sight of all decency.

And frankincense. Behoves it first we pay
Our duty to the Gods.

Chor. Aye, to holy prayers betake ye, to incense and libation:
Good report thou shalt not want from us, nor honest approbation:
For opinions stiff and stubborn better thoughts, I see, are quelling:
And love appears where eyes were fierce, and grace where cheeks were swelling.

BDELYCLEON, PHILOCLEON, CHORUS, *Servants bringing in fire, myrtle-boughs, etc.*

Bdel. (*as the sacred Ceryx*). Pious anthems, pious airs,
Holy thoughts and holy prayers,
Breathe your sacred influence round:
Hist! good words! 'tis holy ground.

(*Soft and solemn music is heard—frankincense is floated round the stage—the Choregus approaches the altar and throws incense upon it—then as follows.*)

Choregus. From thy empyrean height,
Lord of ever living light,
Thou, whose dwelling is allotted,
Where the serpent[1] died and rotted,
Great Apollo, hear and bless
This our purpose with success!
Sacred incense and oblation
Rise before our habitation:
Former errors let them cover:
All our wand'rings, lo! are over.

(*To the Chorus*) Duly now our pray'rs to end,
Let the sacred shout ascend.

[*The Io Pæan is shouted by the Chorus.*

Bdel. (*offering incense*). King, prophet, and bard, keeping guard
o'er my yard[2] in stern elevation:

[1] Delphi, anciently called Pytho, απο του πυθεσθαι, because the serpent which Apollo killed *rotted* there.

[2] In front of the Athenian houses there was generally a small court. Here might be seen a figure of Mercury to drive away thieves, a dog for the same purpose, and an altar in honour of Apollo, where the master of the house occasionally offered sacrifice. From this situation, Apollo took the name of Aguieus, which is given him in the text.

In my sire's blessed name, lo! I frame
these new rites—may they claim approbation!
Be it thine to repair his harsh air,
sordid care and devotion to money:
With ambition to please, grant him ease,
and for lees, drop a portion of honey.
Bland, courteous, and kind, may he find
for his mind a smooth equable channel;
In his ears less availing the quailing
of appellant than that of the panel.
Let it move no surprise, in his eyes
should tears rise, at a tale of woe springing;
While Peace, like a bride, at his side,
from his pride sting and nettle is wringing.

Chor. In humble accordance we bend—to thy pious oration,
And thy newly formed sway recommend—to wide approbation.
Love and good-will toward thee shall grow—in ev'ry direction;
For words lately urg'd by thee show—enlighten'd affection.
Patriotic devotion appears—in thy speech with good actions efficient;
While those who are greener in years—in virtue are still more deficient.

BDELYCLEON, PHILOCLEON, CHORUS, XANTHIAS (*as Dog-Plaintiff*), LABES (*Dog-Defendant*), SOSIAS, PUPPIES, *and* WITNESSES.

Bdel. (*as public crier*). *Oyes, Oyes, in virtue of my office—Waits any member of the Court*[1] *without?*
Let him advance forthwith; we bar admission
Soon as the pleadings have commenced.
Phil. Produce me
The defendant—(*rubbing his hands*) gods! how I'll trounce the rascal!
Xant. (*as accuser*). *Oyes, Oyes, in virtue of my office:*
The cur of Cydathenus these declares

[1] The attendance of the several members of the Heliæa and other courts of justice, was enforced by issuing an injunction similar to that in the text.

'Gainst Labes of Æxone : [1] *'foresaid Labes*
Against the peace and quiet of our state
Did then and there conspire, singly and sole,
To swallow a Sicilian cheese. Penalty [2]—
A collar of stout fig-wood.
Phil. Bring it but home
To him, and he shall die—(*hesitates*) d—n him, a dog's death.
Bdel. (*as Deft*). Labes, so please this Honourable Court,
Is here before them.
Phil. O the villain—how like
A thief he looks! nay, never show your teeth
And grin at me;—tricks pass not here, believe me.
But where's the plaintiff? he of Cydathenus?
Dog. Bow—wow—wow.
Bdel. Why here's another Labes, equal
To any cur for barking, and what's more—
For emptying a porringer.
Sos. (*as Crier*). Silence
Within the Court. Please you be seated (*to Bdel.*). You,
(*to Xanth.*) sir,
Ascend the bema and set forth your charge.
Phil. And I meantime will take a sup of porridge. [*Pours it out.*
Xant. (*as accuser*). Your honourable ears are now possest
Of this our bill and solemn charge. Heinous
And rank—*Phil.* Proceed, the Court are with you. *Xant.* Is
Th' offence, which this vile cur against myself
And—*yeo-yo* [3]—hath committed. For, my Luds,
To hurry him into a nook, a hole,
A corner—there to desicilise (so I
Take leave to speak) a cheese of mightiest size,

[1] Neither of these words is without its signification with a punster like Aristophanes. Labes is substituted for Laches, because derived from a Greek word which signifies *to seize*. Æxone is selected as his borough, on account of the scurrilous language to which its inhabitants were addicted.

[2] The poet follows here all the proceedings of the Athenian courts of justice. In these it was usual for the prosecutor, after stating his own name and borough, to declare his charge and the penalty he wished to follow upon conviction of the accused. Thus the well-known information against Socrates ran in the following manner:—Melitus son of Melitus, of the borough of Pitthos, declares these upon oath against Socrates, son of Sophroniscus, of the borough of Alopecæ: Socrates is guilty of reviling the gods whom the city acknowledges, and of preaching other new gods: moreover, he is guilty of corrupting the youth. Penalty—death.

[3] In the original *ῠπαπαι*, a cant word among the Greek sailors.

In secrecy and darkness—
Phil. (*guarding his nose*). Guilty! guilty!
His very breath is evidence against him.
O what a gale came over me this moment!
Xant. And when I begg'd a partage in his spoil,
To have my suit rejected!—Tell me, sirs,
Hath he an interest in YOU, whose hand
Throws nothing to your dog?
Phil. He gave you nothing?
Xant. Nothing, so help me heav'n!—I too, that am
His comrade!
Phil. (*eats and speaks to himself*). A pestilent warm fellow that!—
This pottage by my faith hath not more fire in't.
Bdel. (*to Phil.*). Beseech you, sir, condemn him not too promptly:
Be both sides heard, ere sentence passes.
Phil. Tut, man—
The case is clear—speaks for itself—utters,
As I may say, a voice.
Xant. (*continuing*). What then remains
But to intreat this Honourable Court
That due deserts may wait on the offender?
Of all our dogs this cur is the most selfish.
He sneaks and sneaks about; and when he finds—
Phil. A cheese, he eats, both th' inside and the out on't.
There's no gainsaying that.
Xant. Take then due chastisement
Upon him: is it fair, in Nature's name,
That one sole house should find two thieves their sustenance?
Beseech ye, sirs, let me not bark in vain:
If vengeance be not link'd with such a culprit,—
Mark me, from this day forth I'm mute. My Luds,
That is my case.
Phil. A case indeed! My ears
Are pain'd, my heart is sick, to hear such roguery,
Sure the sun sees not such another villain!
(*To the Cock*) What sayst good Chanticleer? Hold'st no
with me?
Aye by my faith he does, and nods assent to't.
Hark-ye, good Mister Thesmothet,[1]—a plague!—

[1] The manner in which one of the highest official magistrates in Athen
is here treated, was no doubt much to the taste of the galleries.

Where is he? reach me yonder implement.
Sos. (*as Thesmothet*). There minister unto yourself, so please ye.
I've other work to do. *Oyes, Oyes,*
I summon 'fore the Court Defendant's witnesses.
The platter will come forth, the pestle, scraper,
The roaster, porringer, and all such implements
As ought can service the defence; if they
Be somewhat scorch'd and burnt, it is no matter.
(*To Phil.*) Not yet upon the bench?
Phil. (*arranging himself*). And if the seat
Grow cold, what then? Lucky for that vile dog,
If needs of a less cleanly kind be not
This day upon him, man!
Bdel. (*to Phil.*). Still pitiless
And ruthless, sir! no mercy for a culprit!
Up, up, good Labes, and attempt your clearance:
[*The dog is silent.*
What may this silence mean? Speak, in God's name!
Phil. How should he speak? the rogue has nought to say.
Bdel. Nay, the same thing hath fortun'd him, which erst
Befell Thucydides.[1] Terror hath giv'n
His tongue an apoplectic fit; retire (*to Labes*)
And leave your cause to me. (*Ascends the bema*)—My
honoured Lords,
It 'scapes me not, how hard the task I undertake:
The charge of such a crime (and none sure carries
A greater odium with't) might counsel me
To a more equal feat—Yet will I stand
His advocate.—Labes, to give him justice,
Is, sirs, a dog of honour, and of courage;
He keeps the wolf at distance.
Phil. 'Tis a thief
The dog—a vile conspirator!
Bdel. Nay, nay,
Not so: no dog boasts better birth or nurture;
For heading a large flock, he owns no equal.
Phil. He might as well be nature's commonest work:

[1] Thucydides has been mentioned before in the *Acharnians*. Being suspected of some treacherous proceedings in Thrace, he was called to take his trial, and advancing nothing in his own defence, he was banished by a vote of the ostracism. The reader will not confound this Thucydides with the great historian of that name.

Why must we find him mouthing at a cheese?
Answer me that.

Bdel. And then—he fights your battles—
Protects your gate and does a thousand services.
Hath he subtracted aught, or play'd the filcher?
'Tis Nature's weakness—visit not too roughly:
Alas! his gamut's yet quite new to him,
Nor hath he mastered his first rules in music![1]

Phil. Music, dost say? would he knew not his alphabet!
My ears had then been spared a long oration,
Fram'd t'excuse and whitewash o'er his guilt.

Bdel. My lords will now be pleased to hear our witnesses.
Put the cheese-scraper in the box. Tune up
Your voice and speak the Court distinctly, Scraper.
You acted at that time as treasurer—
Now tell this Honourable Court (your eyes
Upon their Lordships, Scraper!) of such articles
As were committed to your charge (the witness
Stands on his oath he will remember) did you
Or did you not (upon your oath I ask it)
Diminish aught? My Lords, he doth allow
The charge.

Phil. Then he allows a bouncer—

Bdel. (*feelingly*). Nay, nay,
Enforce not, sir, this countenance of sternness:
Look with an eye of pity on the wretched!
Shall I merits speak? This Labes' palate
Scorns not the roughest food—fish-bones, nor offal;—
Then he's for ever shifting ground; being here
And there and ev'ry where;—you idle cur
Hath but one biding place—that's the house-door.
There he takes constant ground, craving a part
Of all that's brought within: deny it him,
And you'll soon know the setting of his teeth!

Phil. Angels and ministers of grace protect me!
Mischief is sure abroad; for I grow soft,
And feel within the powers of persuasion!

Bdel. (*pathetically*). O they are gracious signs! aid the goo
work

[1] Alluding to the usual education of Athenian children, which in the earlier years was confined to letters and to music.

And give it furtherance!—On your sole will
We hang for life or death! as you direct—
But where are the defendant's children? Up, up—
Up to the bema, now, ye miserable;
And let your yelping be in place of prayers,
And tears, and warm petitionary suits.
Now then—yelp for your lives, my lads.

Puppies. Yelp, yelp,
Yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp.

Phil. (*with emotion*). Down, down—

Puppies. Yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp.

Phil. Down, i' the name of heaven!—

Bdel. I have quick ears
To your request: the word hath prov'd a cheat
To many, yet its bidding shall be done. [*Descends from the bema.*

Phil. Curse on yourself, and curse upon this pottage!
I have shed tears: this moment saw the miracle!
But my *will* shared not in the guilt! 'twas but
Repletion and these lentils.

Bdel. Are we then
Acquitted?

Phil. That's a question hard to solve.

Bdel. Now by all names of filial endearment
Let your thoughts turn to better courses. Take
This shell: let Pity hoodwink Justice's eyes,
And drop her token in the mercy-box.

Phil. It may not be. When I know music's rules—
But that's an art I've not yet master'd.

Bdel. Now, sir (*to Phil.*)
Your hand: I'll guide you to the urns.

Phil. Is this
The one assesses punishments?

Bdel. The same.

Phil. Then here I drop my shell. [*Drops a shell.*

Bdel. (*to himself*). He hath mista'en
The urn, and sav'd the culprit.

Phil. Throw we now
In wonted way the shells upon the ground;
The culprit's fortune stands upon the cast.
[*Throws out the shells.*
(*To his son*) How go the votes?

Bdel. That time will show. (*Affects to count them*) Joy! joy!
They're in your favour, dog! why, father, now—
What ails't?
Phil. (*fainting*). Ah well-a-day, some water there!
Bdel. Nay, stand erect and keep your feet, man!—
Phil. (*to his son*). One word:
Is he acquitted?—speak.
Bdel. He is, by Jove!
Phil. I'm a dead man then. [*Swoons.*
Bdel. Psha! away with such
Dull thoughts!—prithee, sir, rise—I pray thee now.
Phil. (*rising slowly*). O Conscience, Conscience! Judge supreme!
how wilt
Thou bear the thought that criminal escaped,
And mine the guilty shell that sav'd him!—Mine! Mine!
O, what shall be my after-course and fortune!
Pardon, pardon, ye ever-living gods!
Thus on my knees I ask it—'gainst my will
'Twas done, nor am I wont to fashion thus
My ways—am not—upon my soul, am not. [*Weeps bitterly.*
Bdel. A truce to such reflections, sir, and leave
Your future life to me: O you shall bear it
Merrily, man!
(*Sings*) We'll to feast and we'll to hall,
We'll to show and festival;
Heedless of that yard of mouth,
Whence come trooping north and south,
From Hyperbolus's lips,
Biting quirks and cranks and quips:—
Others may his mock'ries rue:—
But that mouth is shut for you.
And now let's in.
Phil. Do as thou wilt, boy: I am
At your behest.—Oh!—
Chor. (*to Phil. and Bdel. as they leave the stage*). Where you
wishes conduct you, with speed now be gone,
And our blessing shall wait both on father and son.
(*Turns to the spectators*) To this audience enlightened, ou
benches who press
In numbers past counting, further words we address.

If our speech proffer aught that is deep or profound,
Let it fall not unheeded, nor drop to the ground:
With the dull and the witless such folly might pass;
But to wisdom like your's 'twere eternal disgrace.

PARABASIS.

To a round unvarnish'd tale, if aught such may here avail,
our poet now claims your attention;
And let it ope no breach, though the tenor of his speech
point to anger and sharp reprehension.
On this presence here at large, flat injustice he dares charge;
and that too when large love and honour
Had more fairly been his due for bright largesses, which you
enjoy'd, tho' unknown who their donor.
Priests and prophets,[1] as they say, into objects oft convey
voice and diction where both are deficient;
So of many a bard, I ween, your appellant here hath been
the mouth-piece, tho' secret, efficient.
But this task soon thrown aside, his own proper steeds he
tried,
to their mouths fitting curb, bit, and snaffle;
Then charioted along with the foremost in the throng
bore the heat and the front of the battle.
Rais'd and swell'd with honours great (such on bard yet never
sate)
with meekness and modesty he bore him;
And while his laurels grew, he kept ever in his view
the heights yet unconquer'd before him.
When the swell of private rage foam'd indignant, that the
stage
dar'd upbraid lawless love and affection;
And will'd our poet's speech (guilty pleasures not to reach)
should assume a more lowly direction;
Did he heed the loud reproof? no, he wisely kept aloof,
and spurn'd at corruption's base duress;
For never could he choose to behold his dearest Muse
in the dress of a wanton procuress.

[1] The text alludes by name to a celebrated diviner and ventriloquist of the day, called Eurycles. Aristophanes did not come forward as an acknowledged author till he brought out his *Knights*.

When first the scenic trade of instruction he essay'd,
monsters not men were his game, sirs;
Strange Leviathans that ask'd strength and mettle, and had task'd
Alcides their fury to tame, sirs.
In peril and alarms was his 'prenticeship of arms,[1]
with a shark fight and battle essaying;
From whose eyes stream'd baleful light, like the blazing balls of sight,
which in Cynna's [2] fierce face are seen playing.
Swath'd and banded round his head, five score sycophants were fed,
ever slav'ring and licking and glueing;
While his voice rose loud and hoarse, like the torrent's angry course,
when death and destruction are brewing:
Add such stenches as assail from a sea-calf and a whale,
add loins never owning ablution;
And the parts that lie behind!—foh! inspect them and you'll find
that a camel knows less of pollution.
Rude the portent, fierce and fell, did its sight your poet quell?
was he seen to a bribe basely stooping?—
No, his blows still fell unsparing that and next year, when came warring
with foes of a different trooping.
Then the vigour of his hand check'd those fevers of the land,
those distempers [3] and plagues of the nation;
Who when day had quench'd its fires, had stout halters for their sires,
and for grand-dads work'd close suffocation.
Bed and couch by day they kept, but a tempest from them swept
of the law's utmost pains;—inquisitions,
Warrant, summons, witness-pleas,—fright'ning such as lov'd their ease,
or had milk in their soft dispositions.

[1] The poet alludes to his comedy of the *Knights*, and to the attack upon Cleon in that celebrated drama.

[2] Cynna was a courtesan of the time.

[3] Though the poet evidently alludes here to his comedy of the *Clouds*, and his attack upon the Sophists, much of the allusion is now uncertain and obscure.

To the magistrates [1] outright fled the many in their fright;
while you, in our bard tho' possessing
A cathartic to the hand for these evils of the land,
turn'd traitors and spurn'd at the blessing.
Hence his drama of last year,[2] crush'd before 'twas ripe of ear;–
for the seed, being quite a new sample,
Scarce push'd head above the ground, ere a thousand feet were found
on the delicate stranger to trample.
Yet in spite of such an end,—(so may Bacchus be my friend—
at my cups and libations I'll swear it),
Of all our bards have writ, for conception and for wit,
no comedy yet hath come near it.
'Twas in quite a novel strain, rich and varied in its vein,
unexampled for cunning invention:
And with you the shame now sits, that in hearing it your wits
were gravell'd and lack'd comprehension.
The wise will hold the bard not the less in high regard,
and mourn his unmerited disaster:
True his chariot came not whole nor unbroken to the goal,
yet in speed say what rival had past her?—

Taught by this example,
My good friends, no more trample
On such poets as reach
In their plots and their speech
At a course bold and free
And a fair novelty.
Let their diction and fiction,
Met by no contradiction
Claim a place in the chest
Of your apples possest;
This believe if ye do,
Vest and cloak the year through
Will rich odours dispense,
Hitting keenly the sense
With a smell of ability.
Wit and gentility.

[1] The magistrate particularly specified is that one of the nine archons, or principal magistrates of Athens, called the Polemarch. The Polemarch had more particularly the strangers and sojourners of Athens under his care.

[2] The poet again alludes to the failure of this first comedy of the *Clouds*.

SEMI-CHORUS.

O the days that are gone by, O the days so blithe and bland,
When my foot was strong in dance,[1] and the spear was in my hand!
Then my limbs and years were green—I could toil and yet to spare,
And the foeman to his cost knew what strength and mettle are.
O the days that are gone by!

Now upon this head are thrown
Whiter hairs than even shone
On the bird who breasts and braves,
Silver-bosom'd, silver waves.
Yet beneath this head of grey
Latent fires and embers play;
And at urgent need I show
Youth on my determin'd brow.
Much, believe, should I repine
Bart'ring these old limbs of mine
For a modern youngster's frame:
For the faces and the graces,
Braided locks and mincing paces,
Of the fopling who disgraces
Love and manhood's better name.

FULL CHORUS.

If any here, good gents and friends, my strange costume who see,
Behold this sting which girds my waste and marvel what it be;
Its meaning and its purport, if patient ear he lend,
We here engage, however dull, he soon shall comprehend.
First, we, who own this tail-piece, are men of Attic birth,
And who alone claim founder's[2] kin with this our mother earth.
Our mettle and our services to this our native soil,
The foreign foe we leave to tell, who came our land to spoil.

[1] The martial dance is here most probably intended. Socrates, in a poetical fragment, bears witness that those who by dancing pay most religious honour to the gods, are also the best warriors.

[2] The Athenians particularly prided themselves on being *αυτοχθονες*, *i.e.* sprung from the earth;—a produce of the soil on which they lived.

With boiling rage and fury, with man and horse he came,
And threaten'd all our hives to burn with brimstone and with flame.
But soon as he was landed, with spear and shield we ran,
Put the contest to the trial, fighting stoutly man by man.
With rage our lips we swallow'd; while the darts so thick did fly,
They seem'd to form a coverlid between ourselves and sky.
But Pallas sent her night-bird;[1] and as the owlet flew
Across the host, our armies hope and joyous omens drew.
So by the help of Heaven, ere yet the day did close,
We shouted word of victory, and routed all our foes.
With might and main they trudged it;—we follow'd at their heels;—
And prick'd their Persian trowsers just, as fishermen prick eels.
Their speed was well intended, yet each one as he fled,
We gave, by way of legacy, a sting upon his head:
And still they say in foreign lands, do men this language hold,
There's nothing like your Attic WASP, so testy yet so bold.

SEMI-CHORUS.

O the days that are gone by, O the days that are no more,
When my eye was bold and fearless, and my hand was on the oar!
Merrily, O merrily, I beat the brine to lath,
And ocean cross'd, sack'd cities were the foot-tracks of my path.
O the days that are gone by!
Then had none a care to reach
At the nicer parts of speech,
Reasoning much on taste and tact,
Quick at tongue, but slow to act!
Lie nor tale did then hunt down
Worth and Honour through the town!
(Sycophants and liars base
Were as yet an unborn race)
But who handled best the oar,
He the palm of merit bore—

[1] The flight of an owl across an army just commencing an engagement was reckoned among the fortunate omens by the Athenians.

This it was gave Medes the law;
And for isle and town did measure
Toll and stipulated [1] treasure,
That rich store, on which at pleasure
You our youngsters lay your paw.

FULL CHORUS.

Small reflection and inspection, needs it, friends of mine, to see
In the Wasps and us your CHORUS, wondrous similarity:
Form and fashion, life and temper—one and all in us agree.

Reckon first (nor fear your judgments may disparage either side),
Common feelings of resentment, jealous wrath and testy pride:
Ends the matter here?—for answer let our course of life be tried.

Like the Wasps we swarm and hive us—not in tenements of straw;—
We take wing and instant settle on the courts of common law:—
Some the Archon, some th' Odeum,[2] others the Eleven [2] draw.

Want we neither num'rous parties, who back walls and there take station,
Huddling, plodding, earthward nodding dull and frequent salutation;
Cell-bred worms like, scarce awaken'd into motion and sensation.

Ready wit and pungent weapon are our causes of existence—
Stings have we and prick and prick us into a most sweet subsistence;
Show me one among a thousand, who dares offer us resistance.

Want we not our drones moreover, who repose in idle leisure,
Sedentary and yet feasting, and regaling them at pleasure—
With a sting unarm'd, yet sparing in their food nor kind, nor measure.

[1] The Odeum was the theatre where the musical prizes were decided. The archon also kept his court there.

[2] The Eleven, so called from their number, were officers somewhat resembling our sheriffs. They were elected out of the body of the people, each of the ten tribes sending one member; to these was added a Registrar to make up the number.

Bitt'rest stroke of all we feel it, that an idle brood be fed
At our cost, who never handled oar or jav'lin, never bled,
Nor so much as rais'd a blister in their suff'ring country's stead.

To a point this matter draw I:—if my fellows think with me,
We shall crush this race in future, and promulgate a decree;—
ORDER'D—*he who wants a sting must look to want a judge's fee.*

PHILOCLEON, BDELYCLEON, CHORUS.

SCENE.—*A private room, hung round with various sorts of costly apparel.*

Phil. [1] WHAT, boy, discard my cloak, that trusty friend
Who bore me safe through all the mighty conflict
Where our best friend was Boreas' [2] blasts! Never, son.
Bdel. You miss your better interests, refusing.
Phil. I fit me out indeed in gala suits!
Boy, I know better; 'twas but t'other day
My fuller's [2] bill there stood me in a groat
For damage done my own poor wardrobe.
Bdel. Well, but
Make trial first: 'twas your own choice to be
A debtor, sir, to my good offices.
Phil. And what wouldst have of me?
Bdel. (*taking it off*). First, you'll cashier
This cloak: then please to throw this mantle round
Your neck, cloak-fashion, sir.
Phil. That men should thus
Extend their breed, and purchase suffocation
From their own offspring!
Bdel. Now take this;—on with't:—
No words, I beg.
Phil. And what may this be call'd?
Bdel. Some call it Persis, others Gaunacus.
Phil. Gads me! I took it for a Thymet-blanket.

[1] The father and son enter quarrelling together: the son wishing to improve the paternal costume; the father strongly and obstinately objecting.

[2] The lower citizens of Athens generally wore robes without any dye in them, for the convenience of having them thus repaired; the rich, on the contrary, preferred coloured cloths.—*Theo. Char.* 18.

Bdel. No marvel; you are fresh—untutor'd—new—
Have never been at Sardis;[1] you had else
Been graced with better knowledge sure.
Phil. True, true,
I never was at Sardis—yet methinks
The cloak is much like that is worn by Morychus.[2]
Bdel. Your pardon there: this cloak was made at Ecbatane.
Phil. Say you? Why then your woofs of Ecbatane
Resemble much the breed of flitter tripes.
Bdel. Softly, this is the handy-work of foreigners,
And cost a world of cash; why this one robe
Might suck you up a hundred pound in wool.
Phil. Call it woolsucker then, instead of gaunacus.
Eh! said I right, young truepenny!—
Bdel. Steady, now:
Don't shift your ground so:—there now.
[*Helps him on with the cloak.*
Phil. Curse the beast:
She's set me all on fire.
Bdel. On with it: quick, man;—
Dost hesitate?
Phil. I'll none of it: that's flat—
Nay if I must have something warm, e'en wrap
An oven round me.
Bdel. Prithee, sir, proceed—
I'll be your valet.
Phil. Harkye, hast a flesh-hook?
Bdel. For what?
Phil. To catch me ere I turn to dissolution.
Bdel. Now doff those shoes; (*aside*) were ever seen their fellows!
Here is a pair of the true Spartan cut.
Phil. What, and make traitors of my feet! go shod
In foreign hides!
Bdel. In with your foot—tread firm—
I wish you joy—you're now on Spartan—
Phil. Ground,
I guess you mean. The more should you take shame

[1] Sardis: a great mart for articles of fashionable dress.
[2] Morychus was a tragic poet. He wore thick clothes as being of a cold and delicate habit of body. He is ridiculed in the *Acharnians* and the *Peace* as a great epicure, particularly in fish.

To make me thus set foot in a foe's country.
Bdel. Now, sir, the other foot.
Phil. I crave your pardon—
I've a toe there of the true Attic breed,
That hates your Spartan like the devil.
Bdel. Nay,—sir—
Indeed it must be done.
Phil. Wretch that I am,
And all this plague to cross my ripest years too!
Bdel. Quick: quick: you trifle with your shoeing—now, sir,
Forward, and let your gait be such as suits
A man, whose purse is full: easy and tripping,
Like Salaconius'!
Phil. Have at you then: (*struts about*)
Mark my costume, my bearing and my gait:
And tell me now, of all your wealthies whom I
Resemble most.
Bdel. Nay to my mind there's nought
So much resembles thee, as a fresh wound
That has a coat of garlic plaster on't!—
But come—suppose now you frequent with wits
And men of parts [1]—with some of our great scholars,
Deep-read—full of a plethora with knowledge:
Have you such lofty topics of discourse
As may befit your company?
Phil. Nay, nay,
Leave me to entertain a parley with them.
Bdel. Produce your samples.
Phil. I've a thousand—boy:
Imprimis, I will tell them how the Lamia
Was caught—and, save the mark—smelt not of roses
In the taking, ha, boy! next—observe me—how
Cardopion's mother—
Bdel. Trite, sir, trite!—the figments
Of "th'olden time"—mere day-dreams of the nursery:—
Your tales of men and manners; facts, home facts,
Have you of these, sir?

[1] Literally, *right-handed men.* Of the superstitions of the Greeks, as directed by right and left, it is unnecessary to speak; the epithets right-handed men and left-handed men grew necessarily out of these ominous opinions as common terms of eulogy and reproach.

Phil. I'm familiar with them.
Bdel. A case, a case, sir.
Phil. "Once upon a time
A weasel and a mouse"—
Bdel. Hold, in heaven's name—
Why man! this savours strongly of Theagenes,[1]
"Dolt, blockhead, idiot, left-handed wretch,
('Twas thus he took a scavenger to task)
What! to bring mice and weasels 'twixt the wind
And nose of our nobility?"
Phil. What would you then?
Bdel. Something that smacks of grandeur and magnificence:—
Your Holy Mission—there—with the two props
O' th' church—good Androcles and pious Cleisthenes.[2]
Phil. Mission!—Commission, boy, you mean: yes, yes,
I trail'd a pike at Paros—by the token
(*sighs*) I pouch'd a brace of obols for my services.
Bdel. Then shift your tone: tell how Epheudion box'd
And wrestled with Ascondas—how the man
Was old and grey; but then stout-ribb'd, strong-handed,
With bowels and a breast of steel.
Phil. Go to,
Go to! as if men wrestled here steel-breasted![3]
Bdel. And yet 'tis thus our sophists and our wits
Discourse.—Again—suppose you've foreigners
At table, sir, when vanity is most
On the alert—What have you that smacks richest
Of mettle in your youthful days, to tell of?
Phil. (*eagerly*). There I am with you, boy! (*pauses, then em-*
phatically) the very prime
And top of all my feats was when I stole
Ergasion's vine-props.[4] Eh! what sayst, my younker?

[1] Theagenes is noted by the Scholiast as a person not in the best possibl odour at the time.

[2] Androcles and Cleisthenes were men of infamous lives.

[3] A play of words upon the double meaning of the word θωραξ. T a people so fond of punning as the Athenians, the favourite exercise the palæstra naturally furnished many, the humour of which can now b but faintly appreciated.

[4] It is clearly the object of the poet to hold up the judicial character t contempt; and the insolent and oppressive manner in which the office dicast was discharged must have made this ridicule very agreeable t great part of the audience.

Bdel. A plague upon your vine-props! vine-props, quotha!
A chase, a hunt; a hare well run to death,
Or a wild boar spear'd—have you none of these
To play the braggart on?—mayhap a victory
Won at the festival of Torches:—good now,
Bethink you, sir:—some enterprise of pith
And moment sure, your earlier days afford.
Phil. (*meditates*). Nay, boy, I have't—a feat most brilliant too—
Observe—'twas how Phaÿllus—he—the racer,
Abused me, gave me scurrilous language—how
I fil'd my action 'gainst him;—how I cast him
By two good votes, and I but yet,—observe,
A lubber not thus high. What sayst to that?
Bdel. Enough, enough—now sit ye down, and learn
To feed and take your dinner like a gentleman.
Phil. Pleasant enough! and how would'st have me sit?
Bdel. With decency, and like a man of fashion—
Phil. As thus? [*Putting himself into a ridiculous attitude.*
Bdel. Nay, spare my eyes.
Phil. Or thus?
Bdel. In mercy.—
Observe—your legs should be extended, thus;
Your limbs easy and free, like one well practis'd
In his gymnastics.—Mark me, I beseech you.
Then you commend the plate, or cast an eye
Upon the fretted roof; perchance the curtains
May claim a look of passing admiration.
(*Affecting to call to his slaves*) Hoa, there within! bring water for our hands[1]—
Bring in the tables: quick! set on the dishes:
'Tis done! the banquet's ended, hands are wash'd;
Libations made,—
Phil. Aye, in a dream I grant ye—
Bdel. A strain from the attending Lyrist follows.
Then, for your fellow-drinkers, there are met
Theorus, Cleon, Æschines, and Phanus,
And a rough fellow at Acestor's side
Of the same fashion as himself—you join

[1] At Greek meals ablutions were performed both before and after eating.

The circle—well—catches [1] go round—let's see
How you will bear your part—
Phil. Nay, for a song,
Not one of all our mountaineers [2] excels me.
Bdel. To the proof—suppose me Cleon—good: what next?
I chaunt a stanza from Harmodius—good—
You take me up—Now I begin.
(*preludes, then sings*)
" *Burgh and city, hill and dale,*
Search them all—and mark my tale;—
You'll not find in Attic land"—
Phil. (*preludes, then sings*).
" '*Mong the little or the great*
For this knave a duplicate,
Take him either tongue or hand."
Bdel. 'Twill cost your life to utter such a speech:
He'll bellow endless exile, ruin, death,
Within your ears.
Phil. Then I've another strain:
" *Stop and pause, madd'ning wretch, hold thy phrenzied career*
'Tis for Athens I plead, 'tis for her I show fear:
Impending destruction hangs over her walls:
The bolt's shot—all is over—she totters, she falls!"
Bdel. Put case, Theorus then, your next-hand neighbour,
Grasp hard at Cleon's hand and chaunt as follows:
" *As the story-books tell*
In old times it befell,
That Admetus—but read and you'll know, sirs,
For the gallant and brave,
Who think light of a grave,
How the heart-springs more cheerily flow, sirs."
What ready answer have you now to that?

[1] In the original, *Scolia*, songs sung at the entertainments of the ancients Some, according to Archbishop Potter, were humorous and satirical others were of an amorous description; and many of them turned upo the most serious topics, upon points of morality, upon practical exhorta tions or sentences, and upon the praises and actions of illustrious men. I appears further, that of these songs, some were sung by the whole compan joining in a chorus; others by all the company in their turns, and a thir sort by some few who were best skilled in music; this last was terme *scolium*, from a Greek word signifying crooked, as being sung out of course and not by every man in his own place like the two former.

[2] Alluding to the division of the Athenians into the men of the mountain men of the plain, and men of the sea.

Phil. An answer, boy, full, loud, and musical.
" *From sycophants base*
Who are looking for place,
Jove in mercy thy servant defend!
From tricksters that fawn
Upon purple or lawn;
But most from a two-sided friend!"
Then you have Æschines,
A man of parts and a right delicate ear,
And he sets off as follows:
" *Fair Cleitagora and I,*
And the men of Thessaly,
Once a day had wealth in store;—
But theirs is gone—and woe is me!
For mine lies buried in the sea;
Live he who helps my purse no more!"
Bdel. You know these matters to a nicety;—
But come,
Supper awaits us, sir, at Philoclemon's.
(*Speaks to a servant*) Harkye, lad, take your chest and lay therein—
That we may have wherewith to make us merriment.
Phil. Nay, an you love me, son, beware of drink!—
No wine;—from wine come blows—breaking of doors—
Casting of stones: home reels my drunkard, dozes
Away his headache, wakes at morn, and finds
He has most swinging damages to pay.
Bdel. Not if you drink with gentlemen; d'ye mark me?
For I speak not of ragamuffins: have you
Err'd then? some friend begs pardon, and th' offence
Is quash'd: or else yourself tell pleasant tales
From Æsop or the Sybarites;—such tales
As we are wont to hear at merry-makings.
The plaintiff smiles, and you're anon acquitted.
Phil. Aye, is it so, old true-penny? then be it
My aim (and sure the end will pay the labour)
To learn a stock of these same tales, which wipe
Offence, and put a salve on mischief; now then
I'm at your service, boy: away, away,
Let nought our project sop nor breed delay. [*Exeunt ambo.*

CHORUS.

After much and long reflection I this last conclusion draw,
That for smart right-handed wisdom none my equal ever saw
But your branded and left-handed folly I beg leave to pass,
That and more, sirs, at the door, sirs, drop I of Amyni-Ass.[1]

A scion is he
Of that large family;
Whose thought and whose care
Centre whole in their hair,
Of whatever degree,
Rank or kind it may be,
Full-bottom, tie, perriwig, curl, or toupee.[2]
I saw (under grace)
This hair-braider, in place
Of his rude daily fare—
—A pomegranate and pear,—
Supping lately in state
As Leogoras' [3] mate.
He plough'd in his might—(*a pause*)
He hath sharp appetite—(*a pause*)
And to give him his due,
So hath Antiphon [4] too.
On a mission late sent
He to Pharsalus [5] went—
And of whom there the guest he?

[1] The poet, in this little Chorus, plays upon Ameinias the Archon, once parsimonious and foppish. As a law provided that none of tho distinguished magistrates should be brought upon the stage, the po alters the orthography of the name, and makes a change in his famil which affords him also a lash at Æschines. Ameinias is ridiculed by t other comic writers of that day, particularly for his misconduct in embassy to Pharsalus.

[2] The particular mode of dressing the hair, ridiculed in the text, is th which the Greeks called Crobylus.

[3] Leogoras is handed down to us as a great gourmand, particularly the article of pheasants. He was the father of Andocides the Rhetoricia

[4] There were several persons of this name conspicuous in Atheni history. The person here satirised seems to have been the diviner a dream-interpreter of that name.

[5] Pharsalus, one of the largest cities in Thessaly, stood in one of tho beautiful situations which Greece so frequently offers to the travell The affairs of Thessaly often break upon the reader of Grecian histo with an air of romance, but never more than on that occasion wh Pharsalus was added to the confederacy formed under that extraordina man, Jason of Pheræ. *Xenophon's Hellenics.*

Why of all the Penestæ:[1]
And so it should be;—
For if rank penury
Be a term right in place
For that thrice scurvy race,
One and all will agree,
Of that fair company,
That none could be more a Penestan than he.

Semi-Chor. A rumour has gone,[2]
I am told, through the town,
That your poet and Cleon
Private terms did agree on,
At that time there—when shearing
And rending and tearing
He thought by a brush
To upset me and crush.—
Worn and torn to the skin,
True, I rais'd a loud din;
But my pains pity none
From the by-standers won:—
A laugh and a shout
Threw the rude rabble out,
And gaping Surprise
Stood with wide staring eyes,
To note and to see
If extreme misery
Should wring from my smart
Something biting and tart.
I mark'd in my turn
This their rough unconcern,
And, vex'd at the heart,
I descended—in part—
To an ape's cunning wiles:
I had words, I had smiles:
I spoke, on my creed,
In smooth accent and bland;—

[1] The Penestæ were nearly to the Thessalians, what the wretched Helots were to the Spartans, and the Clarots to the people of Crete.

[2] This obscure Antistrophe, as Mr. Gray remarks, relates to some transaction between Cleon and the poet, of which we know little:—the conclusion of it does not altogether correspond with the bold uncompromising character which is put forth in the parabasis of the play.

Cleon lent on a reed,[1]
And it went through his hand.

XANTHIAS, CHORUS.

Xant. (*rubbing himself*). Well now: if bliss be measur'd by the skin,
Commend me, friends, I say, unto the tortoise.
There show'rs of blows may fall, and no harm done,
In such a crust hath bounteous nature cas'd him.
For me, let a mere stick but cross these shoulders,
And I am a dead man.
Chor. What ails thee, lad?
For lad I needs must call who feels the whip,
Tho' time tell other tale upon his face.
Xant. Lookye—Was ever such a reprobate
As this old gentleman of ours?—a guest
More petulant or with a fouler mouth
I never witness'd yet, and, my good masters,
That's a bold word to say, where Antiphon,
And Hippylus, and Theophrastus, Lycon,
Lysistratus, and Phrynicus are met
At table—first, he stuff'd and made him high
With wine: then fell to leaping, dancing, shouting,
And all the antics of an ass o'erstuff'd
With roasted barley—then 'twas "Boy—do this,"
"Boy—I command you that"—each word between
Commended with a show'r of lusty blows.
Lysistratus, who kept an eye upon him,
Had soon his biting jests and mock similitudes.
He talk'd of *lees most recently enrich'd*,[2]
And *bailiffs who take refuge in a straw-yard.*
The other rais'd a shout, and twitted him
With *locusts which have cast a threadbare cloak.*

[1] Literally—*the vine was deceived in what it expected to be its prop*, apparently an Athenian proverb.

[2] It is not quite clear to what these two facetious disputants allude. The "lees recently enriched" may possibly refer to the improvement of the old dicast's person and manners under the care of his son. The straw-yard is perhaps an allusion to the old proverb, "the ass has made his way to the straw-yard:" bailiff is substituted for ass in reference to the dicast's employment. The locust and thread-bare cloak are terms easily understood.

Then talk'd of Sthenelus,[1] "*who put to sale*
His furniture for very want and poverty."
This drew from all a thunder of applause,
Save Theophrastus,[2] who wants neither sense
Nor breeding. Well: the senior saw him turn
And bite his lips. Anon the storm fell there:
"And whence," quoth he, "this air of daintiness
In Theophrastus: him, forsooth, who has
A smutty tale for ev'ry rich man's table?
Lickspit and flatterer both! to me this forehead!"
Thus were his insults dealt to all in turn,
Mix'd up with rustic taunts and jibes, and larded
With idle fables, such as had no reference
To what was passing at the time. What would you
Have on't? The wine soon mounts into his head,
And he betakes him to the street, there cudgelling
Each passenger he meets—But yonder see
He comes, stumbling at ev'ry step: I'll off
While yet the cudgel's at a distance. [*Exit*

PHILOCLEON, BDELYCLEON, CHORUS, SINGING-GIRL.[3]

Phil. (to the crowd). Helter, skelter,
To hole and to shelter:
Foot or hand that first nears me,
Good blow shall be dealt her.
See ye this flambeau?
He that has felt her,
Knows blisters ensue
Wherever I melt her.

Bdel. To-morrow's sun shall see thee shent for this,
And sorely too—thou most incorrigible!
Aye, brave it as you will, my youthful spark,
To-morrow, mark, we muster all our corps
And summon thee to justice—

Phil. Summon! d—n him
He lacks original opinions! Summon!

[1] Sthenelus is said to have been a mime and a tragic actor.
[2] It is not known who this Theophrastus was.
[3] The dicast, as just come from a nightly entertainment, enters with a torch in one hand, and leads a singing-girl in the other; he is followed by a crowd of persons whom he has insulted in the streets.

Where did he get the term? 'tis obsolete—
Can't stomach it, I tell ye. Summon, quotha!
I know of none, but what these lips hold out—
(Buss me, you wench! (*to the singing girl*)—again, you little grass-hopper!)—
And—hiccup!—down with ballot-boxes—what sayst
To that, old Statute-book? (*to Bdel. who is retiring*)—(*to the crowd*) Eh! sirs, have we
No place, no reverence, that thus you press
Upon our steps?—but where's my man of law—(*looks about for his son*)
My precedent, my little three obols? [1] Gone?
Gone to the winds, so let him go.—This way—(*speaks to the singing girl*)
My golden butterfly—(*sings*) now we go up,
Up, up—here, use an old man's arm—harder on't—
'Tis old but equal to the burthen, wench:
And didn't I compass things most cleverly
To steal you as I did from those same merry-makers?
Oddsheart! those rude and frolicking roisterers—
What now, you little giggling thing! dost pay me
With a horse-laugh for't?—hiccup! (steady, boys,
Steady!—) but that's the way with you young wenches
O' the singing school: well, well, be a good child—
And use an old man kindly; and, harkye, girl,
Soon as I've put my boy beneath the turf,
I'll make thee mistress of my house—I will—
At present I'm not master of my own,
D'ye see: (*Sighs*) for sooth I'm young and serve a wardship
Unto my son—'tis a dear skinflint—crusty
Withal—and scrapes his radishes; confound him!
A sneaking, pitiful, cummin-splitting fellow,
Still troubled with the megrims, lest myself
Or property should go to waste. (*Weeps*) For I'm
His only one—he hath neither chick nor child
But me—his all in all, and wherewithal.
But yonder see he comes, as the north wind
Were in his tail and he must drive before it.
Stand by me, girl—and hold this torch—ecod
I'll banter him a little—'twas his way

[1] As we should say of a lawyer in English, *my six-and-eight-pence.*

With me, ere I was of the Mysteries.
Bdel. So, sir, a wench must serve your purpose, must it!
You whose sole suit should be unto your coffin!
Think'st to escape for this? Nay, by this light,
But thou shalt suffer for't.
Phil. Where are we now?
What is our stomach ripe for suits, old vinegar?
Bdel. None of your rude scurrilities to me:
How dar'st thou steal this minstrel from the guests,
And rob the feast of its most lovely portion?
Phil. Listen:—when I was at the Games (a mere
Spectator, mind), there wrestled with Ascondas
A man in years, yclep'd Epheudion.
The lusty senior levell'd fist and beat
The youngster to the ground:—speaks the tale clearly.
Or must black eyes (*throws himself into a boxing attitude*) and bruises, say, enforce it?
Bdel. (*drawing back*). Thy matter is well conn'd; thou hast not seen
The games for nought.

Characters as before, PANARIA.

Panaria, or Baking-woman. Help, in Heaven's name I ask it!
Stand by me, sir (*to Bdel.*) and right an injur'd woman!
This knave (he and no other) has clean ruined me.
By the same sign, he struck me with that torch,
Whereby I lost ten loaves, each worth an obol;—
Add four that topp'd the burthen, and . . .
Bdel. (*to Phil.*). Dost hear,
Dost see, dost mark all this?—Thou roisterer!
More suits than this that drunken bout will yet,
I fear, engender—
Phil. To the winds with fear!
Tut, man! a merry tale heals all. My word
Upon't, this wench and I remain not long
At strife.
Pan. (*chafing*). Well, well! as I'm a person now,
It shall not be without some taste of danger.
No: an my name be Myrtia (daughter, look-ye!),
To Sostratë and good Ancylion,

My precious wares shall not be lost for nothing!
Phil. List, my good woman, I've a tale to tell thee.
Pan. Tales! Tales anan! Tales serve not here, believe me.
Phil. But list. *Once* (*'twas returning from a banquet*)
A bold and drunken bitch 'gan bark at Æsop :
" Bitch," quoth the fabulist, *" if that foul tongue*
Of thine could purchase thee a crust, why, bitch,
It were clear proof of sense to bark : if otherwise "—
Pan. What! flouted, mock'd! Observe I summon thee,
Be who thou wilt, before the market-officers,
For damage done unto my goods and chattels.—
Be this same Chærephon [1] my witness.
Phil. List
Again, and mark if I speak properly.
A *contest rose 'twixt Lasus* [2] *and Simonides,*
(*The day has long gone by*) *who show'd most mastery*
In music—*" 'tis a* [3] *matter claims no interest*
In me," quoth Lasus!
Pan. (*fretting*). So! so! so!
Phil. Why, Chærephon,
Thou'rt witness to a woman made of buckthorn!—
E'en such another, faith,—so pale, so woe-begone,—
Euripides suspended on a rock,
And call'd her Ino.[4]
Bdel. Yonder comes, methinks,
Another plaintiff! Mark, and he too brings
His witness with him.

[1] Chærephon was one of the scholars and friends of Socrates. He prosecuted his studies with such application and intenseness that he brought on himself a duskiness of countenance, which gained him the nickname of the Bat.

[2] Lasus of Hermione, according to Suidas, lived in the 58th Olympiad; and, as that writer adds, he was by some ranked among the seven wise men in the room of Periander. He was the first who wrote a book upon music, and originated the Dithyrambic contest. Some foolish stories of him are told in the seventh book of Athenæus. It was this Lasus, according to Herodotus (*Polymnia*, c. 6.) who detected the interpolations of Onomacritus, mentioned in the comedy of the *Knights*.

[3] This *mot*, which passed into a proverb, has also been ascribed to Hippocleides on the occasion which lost him the hand of the daughter of Cleisthenes, king of Sicyon. It is derived from the Erato of Herodotus, c. 126–130.

[4] Euripides in *Medæâ*, 1282–89. The story of Ino throwing herself from a high rock into the sea, and the occasion of this violence, are too well known to need repetition.

Characters as before.—PLAINTIFF, WITNESS.

Plaint. Oh! oh! oh! I'm bruis'd!
I'm murder'd!—in this presence here I charge
This senior with most rude assault and battery!
Bdel. With battery! Heav'n in its mercy now
Forbid! (*to Plaintiff*) Harkye, sir, name your damages;
Myself will pay them, and owe thanks to boot.
Phil. Let be, let be—I'll make my peace myself.
First I confess, that I assail'd the man;
Nay, further, that I beat him: hither, friend—
Rests it with me to name a compensation,
Or will yourself explain what sum may spread
A salve upon these wounds?
Plaint. Nay, for that matter
E'en let it rest with you:—for me, sirs, I am
A man of peace and quietness, and hate
A law-suit as I hate the devil.
Phil. List now:
There was a Sybarite once who, lacking skill
In horses, yet must needs turn charioteer.
Fate threw him from his car; and he fell, mark me,
Engender'd on his head a huge contusion.
A friend came up, and what th' advice he gave him?
'Twas this: "Practise no art," quoth he, "henceforth,
In which thou'rt not a master." Hence away
To Pittalus:[1] by the same rule he'll find
A salve for thee.
Bdel. This tallies with the rest.
Plaint. (*to his witness*). You'll please to bear this answer well in memory.
Phil. A word before you go; "*It chanced in Sybaris*
A woman broke a pitcher."
Plaint. (*to witness*). Mark: for this too
May ask an attestation.
Phil. *Pitcher straight*
Look'd out his witness; good! he summon'd her
Before the Justice: "Pitcher," quoth th' offender,

[1] Pittalus has been mentioned in the *Acharnians* as one of the public physicians at Athens.

" Hadst thou let go this attestation, Pitcher,
And look'd thee out a bandage for thy wound,
It would have smack'd much more of sense."
Plaint. Nay, cease not—
Scoff till the matter come before the court.

BDELYCLEON, PHILOCLEON, CHORUS.

Bdel. So help me, heav'n, thou stay'st no longer here,
But by the waist I'll seize thee—
Phil. And what then?
Bdel. Force thee within the house. If I forbear,
So many summon thee, that witnesses
Will fail them.
Phil. *—In the case of Æsop once*
The Delphians—
Bdel. *" 'Tis a matter claims no interest*
In me "—
Phil. *Made charge that he had filch'd a cup*
From Phœbus : what said Æsop ? he made answer,
That once the beetle—
Bdel. Hold, hold, by the gods,
Or this same beetle tale will prove my death.
[*Philocleon is forced out by his son.*

Chor. (*as he retires*). Happy greybeard art thou!
To thy fortunes I bow!
That mode of life rude,
Hard, crusty, and crude,
To the winds thou mayst give,
And with gentlemen live!
Old habits to change
Is a thing hard and strange;
And yet there have been,
Who by changing the scene,
And haunting with men
Of a different ken,
New manners have taken,
And old ones forsaken.
None meantime will deny
That, at least, will not I,
(Nor any, not winking

At a wrong way of thinking)
All respect to the son
Who such wisdom hath shown.
In a way quite his own
All my senses he won;
And I madden'd for joy,
As I heard the sweet boy.
For well did he battle
His father's wild prattle,
His pro and his con
He put down one by one,
Showing neatly by logic
That wise was the project,
Engend'ring desire
T' embellish his sire,
And fit him, tho' late,
Both for grandeur and state.

XANTHIAS, CHORUS, PHILOCLEON, BDELYCLEON.[1]

Xant. (*to the Chorus*). Now, by good liquor, sure some god hath slipt
The knot of all untoward things, and roll'd them
In a huge flood upon our house! Our senior
Had given long time unto his cups, when lo!
Flute-music came across him. At the sound
He started, let himself all loose to joy,
And a whole night is telling, while he practises
The steps and dances[2] which the emulate pride
Of ancient Thespis first brought into vogue.
As for our modern masters—tut! he swears them
Mere idiots, and is ready to give proof,
That they are bankrupts in the mighty art.

Phil. (*speaks from within*). Who holds the door in stern and watchful state?

[1] In the following scene the ridicule is levelled at the dances used on the stage, and more particularly at the εκλακτισμος, a dance much used by the Grecian women, and of which the chief excellence consisted in throwing the heels higher than the shoulders.

[2] The ancient poets, says Athenæus, as Thespis, Pratines, Carcinus, and Phrynicus, were called ορχησικοι (dancers) because they not only used much dancing in the CHORUSES of their plays, but taught the art to such as wished to learn it.

Xant. The madman's loose, and makes for post and gate.
Phil. Throw wide the bolts (*enters dancing*), the measur'd steps begin—
Xant. To call it phrenzy would be no great sin.
Phil. (*dancing*). The twisted side the forceful motion owns;
Lows the wide nostrils, and the backbone groans.
Xant. He raves—he is possest—drench him with hellebore.
Phil. (*dancing*). Like the spurr'd cock, by fierce opponent crost,
Strikes Phrynichus—(*kicking at the slave*).
Xant. (*rubbing himself*). The art is not yet lost.
Phil. (*practises*). Float the long arms—
Xant. The case is clearly seen—
Phil. (*practises*). Spread the wide thighs—
Xant. A ship might sail between—
Phil. (*practises*). High spring his heels.
Xant. Your own are not in fault.
Phil. And win the heavens in a lusty vault.
Th' obedient knee-pan, loose and never still,
Twists, turns, and circles at the master's will:
Bdel. (*entering*). Psha! psha! this is mere phrenzy, not agility.
Phil. List all—I stand and challenge rivalry.
Is there who prides him in the dancer's art?
I throw my voice and dare him to the trial:
'Tis to our modern playwrights I address me—
Give me a man that may contend with me—
I pause and wait for a reply: what, none?
Bdel. One comes at least, who will not balk your fancy.
Phil. His name—his name—good wag?—
Bdel. 'Tis the middle spawn
Of Carcinus.[1]
Phil. I'll swallow him anon then.
Oddsfish! I'll beat him into harmony!
I'll teach him in a musical tattoo
What are the rules of rhythm: surely the knave
Has yet to learn then.
Bdel. More work for your heels, sir:

[1] Carcinus in Greek signifies a *crab*.—The reader is ill-versed in Aristophanes if he does not reckon upon having this pun pursued through the remainder of the present scene.

Another crabling, see, is coming forward,
Own brother to the first.

Phil. Then gulp—I've swallow'd him.

Bdel. Save us! there's nought but crabs: a third advances,
And still the rogue calls Carcinus his father.

Phil. His species, boykin? cruet or sea-spider?

Bdel. Nay Pinnoteer,[1] I think, might better suit him—
'Tis a most dwarfish breed, and yet the marmoset
Endites his tragedy!

Phil. Beshrew me, Carcinus,
But thou art happy in thy offspring! Heav'ns, man!
The stage is fill'd with flimsy flutterers!
Well, I must harness me for this encounter—
(*To his son*) Be it your care to furnish me fit pickle,
If I should master this same race of shell-fish.

Chor. (*to his troop*). Friends, awhile now give way, and make room for their play,
thus straiten'ed they hardly can frisk it:
A stage there, a stage! we'll sit here in our age,
and mark how these whirligigs whisk it!

Semi-Chor. Children of a mighty Sire,
Water-gender'd, void of fire!
Now commence your rounds, and throw
To the winds the wanton toe.
By the ocean-skirted sand,
By the shingle and the strand,
Leap, till shrimps, a genial brood,
Claim fair kin and brotherhood.
Long continuous circles wheel,
Point the foot and lift the heel;
Leap till the spectator's gaze
Pay the marvel with his praise;
Leap till Wonder's self throw out
All her transports in a shout.

Semi-Chor. Like the top beneath the scourge
Endless course and motion urge.
Upward let your legs be thrown,
Till Jove find heav'n not all his own.

[1] The Pinnoteer is the smallest of crabs, and here serves to designate Xenocles, the tragedian, who seems to have excited the particular spleen of Aristophanes.

Chor. And see, see, the King [1] of the shell-fish advancing,
And his offspring he joins, pirouetting and dancing!
Delighted he moves—O the blessed community,
They of dancers the Triad, and he, sirs, the Unity!
My feet itch for a dance; would the bard do us pleasure,
From the stage he'd dispatch us and treading a measure;
Never yet liv'd his peer, who so master'd his art,
As to bid all his troop in a galliard depart!

[*Exit Chorus in a grotesque dance.*

[1] Carcinus himself enters here and joins the dance. To make the burlesque more complete, the performers were probably so arranged as occasionally to imitate crabs in their form and motion.

PRINTED BY
THE TEMPLE PRESS AT LETCHWORTH IN GREAT BRITAIN